

THE
LONDON READER
of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1171.—VOL. XLV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 10, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[“WELL, ELLEN, I SEE A GREAT CHANGE IN YOU. YOU ARE CERTAINLY A MOST BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN!”]

A PLAIN GIRL.

—o—

CHAPTER XXXIV.

I REMEMBER nothing distinctly for several days. I lay in a darkened room, with ice and eau de Cologne on my head, and I have vague recollections of hammering sounds (betokening packing) ascending from the lower regions; and then as my brain cleared, and my mind sprang back to everyday matters, I was aware that I was not alone. I was being watched over by a tall, dark, very beaky old lady, with a stern and severe countenance; in short, my mother-in-law.

I lay quite still, quite keenly conscious for a whole day, with my eyes shut, feigning sleep—in real truth, holding a solemn review of all my bitter experiences, staring mentally into that black cloud that had so cruelly descended on my life, trying to see if one little ray of light was visible anywhere; but no, all was darkness—darkness.

My father was as far from the fulfilment of his hopes as ever, even though in the mad

effort to restore his shattered fortunes I had wrecked happiness, and, to all appearance, honour. They had gone in vain. That wicked wretch, who had been the ruin of my parents, would as surely destroy me. All who crossed his path seemingly sustained a blight!

I had failed to carry out my purpose. If I had even the satisfaction of knowing that I had succeeded I could bear the rest better; but to think that the case was worse than ever—that I, miserable girl, had left my good name at that man’s mercy for nothing; that I had lost George for nothing.

What had I to live for? I lay there and asked myself this question, and wished most fervently that I were dead—a quiet easy death. I did not wish to make my exit from the world by violent means or by my own hands. Once dead people might think more tenderly of me. I was so young—young people are generally regretted more acutely than the aged or middle-aged!

As my mind travelled over the only pleasant prospect I had to contemplate, to wit, my own death—death of broken heart—I saw myself laid out, my hands crossed on my breast,

white flowers strewed round me, and beheld George weeping over my bier—my innocence proved—too late.

I felt that I would be glad to die to achieve such results. It almost invariably happened that when people were dead their memories were cleared—at least, so I had read in books. I saw no road but by death out of all my misfortunes. Colonel Kant would not clear me; my father’s word went for nothing, and George had seen me with his own eyes in Colonel Kant’s house. He wanted no other testimony—his own senses were sufficient!

“Asleep still?” said a low voice close to me.

I had heard no footstep, and I opened my eyes and found old Mrs. Karslake’s nose within an inch of mine. Perhaps as I laid so still she had a vague idea that I was what I had just been wishing—dead.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, a little startled.
“Are you better?”

“Yes, thank you,” trying to raise my head, but it was still like lead, and fell back almost of its own accord on the pillow.

“Where is George?” I asked, faintly.

"He sailed yesterday," she answered, very stiffly.

"Sailed! where?"

"For India, with the regiment."

I lay speechless for several moments, and then said,—

"How long have I been here?"

"Five days to-day."

"Where have they gone to?"

"Bombay, and then Afghanistan, to the war. It was a sudden order—all the wives and children are left behind."

I could not speak for some time, there was such a big lump in my throat. Mrs. Karslake went over to the window and stood looking out. It was a grey, gusty day, I could see, and the wind was blowing the sand before it in clouds. There was not much outside to rivet her attention, and presently she moved round and was about to leave the room, but I beckoned her:

"Mrs. Karslake," I said, in a low voice, "I suppose George has told you about me?"

"He has," she returned sharply.

"But what he thinks is not true."

She looked at me steadily and made no answer.

"It is not, indeed," I reiterated, earnestly.

"Pray don't excite yourself," she said, coldly; "it can do no good. I have formed my opinion; we will not open the subject. I know all; nevertheless, I am George's mother. His wishes, his good name, are of much account in my sight. I will extend you the protection of my roof; you are my care—"

"And you my jailer!" I said, bitterly.

"As you please. I shall certainly do all that lies in my power to prevent your again straying from the path of virtue."

"I have never left it. You have no right to say so."

"Do not let us argue; it is bad for me, still worse for you. I shall do my best to do my duty by you. More no one could expect; in fact, not one in ten thousand would suffer you inside her doors. One word. Miranda does not know—only I; we will never touch upon this most painful topic again. If you are better we will go up to town the day after tomorrow. This house is already let, and I have dismissed most of the servants, and all your things are already packed. The sooner we can leave the better. I do not wish to hurry you or agitate you, but I'm certain that you will see the propriety of leaving this place and its associates behind as soon as it is possible for you to move."

I was able to leave my bed the next day, and the following one the house and Sandgate. I felt quite wooden and apathetic, and cared not where I went. From no point did one little glimpse of hope shine upon my dark future. I had nothing to look forward to but bad news, the probable prospect of learning that George was wounded, or had been killed. And supposing he were to die, still holding such an opinion of me, what good would my innocence avail me? what good would all the clearing up and justification in the world do me after that?

We lived very quietly in London. Miranda was in manner colder, more detestable, and more aggressive than ever. She hated me, and made no secret of her dislike; and why she hated me I could not discover, unless it was for the fatal reason that I was younger and better-looking than herself. She had no other plea, for I always maintained a studiously courteous manner to her, and she was not in George's secret, like her mother.

I liked the old lady by far the best of the two. Now that I came to know her I discovered that her haughty mien, and chilly manner, and piercing eye meant nothing. Her bark was worse than her bite; and Miranda's bite was serious, her bark inoffensive.

Miranda, I soon discovered, to my great surprise, ruled her mother despotically, and was a selfish, conceited, cold-hearted, impudent young woman. Mrs. Karslake, I discovered also, was in her own way very fond of George; and he, too, ruled her, and made her

do as he pleased, notably with regard to me. This was a link between us, a link we never alluded to, but it was there all the same.

I had noted her eager scanning of the mails in the papers, her trembling interest in the war telegrams—second only to mine—and I surprised her in tears one day holding George's photo in her hand.

"We only saw one another as a rule at meals. I had a small sitting-room to myself, where I lived aloof, as if in a fastness; no one ever crossed my threshold.

Here I sat and read, and worked and thought, and fretted away most of my looks, and cried till my eyes became quite dim and painful. I had no communication with the outer world; I dared not correspond with my cousins at the Castle, for had not George painted my character in sepia to my uncle. He, though a poor, easy-going, broken-down gentleman, had his own very strict notions of propriety; he would not permit my cousin to have any further dealings with me by letter or otherwise—of this I was confident.

Mrs. Karslake and Miranda lived nearly as much in seclusion as I did—at least, Mrs. Karslake did. She was in no frame of mind to receive company when her only son was away at the wars, carrying his life in his hand.

He wrote to her constantly—to me, of course, never—and she vomched such stray crumbs as that he was well and liked the life of action. Each mail-day I looked and longed for the post, and noted—not always, but every three or four weeks—a thin foreign letter, which Mrs. Karslake pounced upon and devoured greedily.

I felt often inclined to tear it out of her hand, or to go down on my knees and implore her to let me see it; but I kept my foolish impulses well down, and generally sat through the ordeal with an apathetic wooden face, as if the Indian mail had no possible interest for me.

One day, on one of these very mornings, Miranda said, across the table to me, quite suddenly,—

"How odd it is that George never writes to you, Ellen! Never once have you had a line, and he is gone four months!"

There was such an ill-natured glee about the remark that made me feel as if she had just reached over and given me a slap in the face.

"Why is it?" she continued.

"Have you not heard? Has your mother not told you that your brother and I have quarrelled?"

"Still, you might write!" diplomatically.

"No, there is no occasion."

"And is it a mere lovers' quarrel?" she asked. "Fancy, and only married a year!"

"We won't talk about it, my dear," interrupted her mother, very nervously, from behind the tea-urn.

"But Ellen does not mind, and I want to know what George has done. Is it his temper?"

"I told you, Miranda, when I brought Ellen here that there had been an unpleasantness. Why do you rake up the subject?—a very welcome one to me and to Ellen! It is no concern of yours, remember," said her mother, sternly.

"It is a concern of mine, when people say what has become of Mrs. George Karslake? Is it true that he left the country without bidding her good-bye, and that they are dead cuts?"

"That's only the malicious query of some idle, gossiping acquaintance. They would not say that to me, and so I beg that you will not refer to it again," getting up to ring the bell.

Miranda merely laughed, and shrugged her shoulders, and helped herself to jam. I sat by, red and white by turns, whilst the mother and daughter thus descended into the arena, and fought a battle, or tourney, about me under my very eyes.

I think Mrs. Karslake did not hate me as

much as she would have liked to do. I was far more manageable than she expected—very quiet, very silent, no trouble in the house, and taxed her powers of surveillance but little.

I was never allowed to leave the house alone, on foot or otherwise. She generally took me out with her in the brougham in the afternoon, and how I hated this my daily airing!

As she shopped or paid visits I was left in the carriage. I wonder if she had ever shocked the respectable coachman or footman by telling them to keep an eye on me?

All the same, I had a *tete-a-tete*, though a very short one, with my father at the off-window of the carriage on one of these occasions.

Just a few hurried sentences sufficed to tell him all—that I had failed, had been taken in my own net, and that nought had come of my attempt but misery and disgrace.

He listened to me in silence; he knew that I had failed, but he had not heard all till now, nor of the fate of his precious proofs.

Poor man! This part of my narrative was a terrible blow to him. He told me on his side one or two things I had not heard before. One was that Colonel Kant had left the service.

I knew that his illness was chronic and hopeless, and that he was nevertheless trying to drown care amid a series of the wildest orgies on the Continent.

"I give him six months to live; and, oh, Nellie! if he should die carrying his secret beyond the grave it will kill me!"

These were his last words, for I suppose he saw signs of my mother-in-law, and he quickly withdrew and vanished.

What a tedious, dreary winter and a wretched, miserable, wet spring that was that I spent in London!

At last long-looked-for April made its appearance, and with it my son, the future heir to the honours and titles of the house of Karslake.

His grandmother was enchanted with him, and was very angry with me for saying that I had no idea that young babies were ugly.

She made such a fuss about him that any one would have supposed that he was her property, not mine.

Once I was able to assert myself. I took the law into my own hands, and kept him in my own little sitting-room, all to myself, whether his grandmother would come humbly knocking for admittance, that she, too, might worship at my shrine—i.e., the bassinet.

"I'm so glad it's a boy," she said to me, confidentially. "I'm sure George will be pleased. You see, he was the last of the Karslakes, and he thinks so much of the name."

Of this I was well aware. Was it not solely on that account, because I had the honour of bearing it, that he had not flung me from his doors last year?

"We will call him George, of course. I see he is going to be a real Karslake. Look at the shape of his hands!" exhibiting two little tiny mitts.

The grandson developed new beauties day by day to Mrs. Karslake and me. Now it was his toes, now his eyes, now his hair which began to be visible to the naked eye, and was going (oh, joy!) to be dark.

Such a thing as a fair Karslake had never been known, and if I had introduced a son with light locks into the connection I would have been the means of establishing a new epoch in the family complexion, and have been considered to have behaved in a most disappointing and discreditable fashion.

The next thing to be arranged was the christening and the name. George, of course; that was understood; but imagine poor Mrs. Karslake's horror when I announced that as she had chosen one name it was the least that she could do to allow me to select another. I would call him Philip, after my father.

Mrs. Karslake, who was standing, baby in arms, actually staggered to a chair and gasped, and then said, in a sepulchral tone,—

" You don't know what you are talking of, Ellen."

" I do well," I said, stoutly. " My father, poor man! has suffered for a crime of which he is as innocent as that baby," pointing to my offspring. " It is the only mark of respect and faith in him I can show him now. It will touch him, I know, to hear his grandson is named after him."

" Never!" cried my mother, " never!"

" Then he shan't be called George!" I said. " No! You may start. You chose that name, not I. I am very vexed with George; I don't know that I shall ever forgive him."

Now that I was well and strong and had actually a son all my own I felt braver and bolder than I had done for many a month, and I spoke out for once.

" I declare to you, Mrs. Karslake," I said, coming over and laying my hand on my property, " that I am as innocent of any thought or deed that does not become George's wife as—as this child," being hard set for an illustration. " What I did, I did to clear my father. I was nearly driven crazy between my duty to him and to George.

" Colonel Kant is the guilty man. I know it; he even confessed as much to me. Then when I went to him and denounced him, he threw the proofs of his guilt into the fire, and laughed in my face, and said he would ruin me as he had destroyed my mother.

" She would not marry him. Did you not know? My father's trial and all the anxiety killed her. Indirectly Colonel Kant was the cause of her death. He has been the cause of worse than death to me.

" Do you not think it has been a slow living agony to me to live here, watched, despised, and on sufferance, supposed to be—No; we won't go any further; it has nearly killed me.

" I have lost George—I've lost my friends, my youth, for, though not twenty-one, I really feel very old. I've often—oh, so often!—wished that I were dead, for every way I turned my life looked so black; but it is better now," snatching up the baby. " He is too young to believe anything bad of his mother"—his age was six weeks—" and, at any rate, I am first with him."

Mrs. Karslake stared at me as I poured out these sentences in an impetuous torrent, as if she thought I had taken leave of my senses.

Presently she got up, and said,—

" Ellen, I don't know what to say, or who to believe; but George is never mistaken. On the other hand, I have never known your conduct to be anything but most correct. You are truthful, modest, and—well, I'm much fonder of you than you think, and I often wonder what George would say if he knew I make excuses for your folly. It was, as far as you were concerned, nothing but folly. Colonel Kant, every one knows, has ruined many a home. You are really strikingly beautiful, and being young—no mother—"

" There, don't, Mrs. Karslake, don't make more excuses for me; they are all nonsense. Youth and beauty had nothing to do with it, but crime and death. You have seen Colonel Kant. Pray, do you think so little of your own son as to suppose that he could rival him with any sane woman, much less with me, his wife?"

" Yes, true; there's some sense in what you say. George is a very handsome fellow," she observed, with a glow of motherly satisfaction; " and, certainly, he was very fond of you. Ah, my dear, you should never, even with the best intentions, meddle with these bad men, and in these police affairs. See what has come of it!"

" I see," I said. " George and I are as much separated as if we were dead. He gave me no chance. He believes the very worst of me. Oh, you can't think all the awful things he said! They seem to be ringing in my ears yet."

" You will make it up over the child, you will see."

" No, we won't. I don't think he will make the slightest difference. How can he? If you look at the matter—at me, I should say, from the point of view with which George regards me—"

" You are the mother of his heir."

" People hate both their heirs and their heirs' mothers very thoroughly sometimes, as I dare say you know."

" Don't be so bitter, Nellie"—she had never called me Nellie before—" it does not suit a young girl like you."

" Then, how about Miranda?" I asked, quickly.

I received no answer to this, but a most inconsequent remark instead.

" You know I telegraphed to George. I'm expecting a letter from him now every day. I wonder what he will say? A letter takes nearly five weeks from Cabul."

Whatever he did say I never heard. Mrs. Karslake perused the epistle alone. There was no message for me.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The christening was quiet and select, but the robes of George Philip would have become a prince, and his christening mug was of solid gold. I held him at the font myself, and had my own way with the names; and after the ceremony, there being no *déjeuner*, his granny and I took him for his first drive in the Park.

There was a block at Hyde Park Corner, and in another brougham alongside of ours sat my grandmother, looking more feeble and withered and bent than I could have believed possible; her only companion was a supercilious-looking, pink-eyed poodle, who had the front seat all to himself. I was looking out at her side; our faces were quite close together, the glasses down, and she recognised me and stared. I ventured—and it was a lucky thought—to hold up baby and show him to her in all his bravery, and, to my delighted surprise, she actually put out her hand, and said, " Come and see me, Ellen—come to-morrow," and then there was a plunge forward on the part of our horses, and we passed on—the critical meeting was over.

" That was Mrs. Dennis, was it not?" said my mother-in-law, " and the dear child has softened her heart, I'm sure—and no wonder! Of course you will go and see her to-morrow. She may do a great deal for him; she is an immensely rich old woman—her wealth is quite fabulous!"

" So I have heard," I said.

" But of late she has suddenly gone into retirement; they say her health is very bad. She was a wonderfully young-looking woman for her years. She is older than I am—a good deal."

Of course I availed myself of grandmamma's invitation, and was left at her familiar door the next afternoon by my mother-in-law, who was most anxious to leave the baby as well, but I knew grandmamma better than she did and declined. Morris met me in the hall quite like an old friend, and, casting up eyes and hands, exclaimed,—

" Laws! Miss Ellen, I hardly knew you, and I'm real glad to see you. You will find the mistress greatly broken-down and changed; but, aye, deary-deary me! that was a terrible business about Mr. Bellamy!"

At this I burst out laughing—it was very seldom I laughed now.

" And how you are changed! I remember well your standing in there," pointing to our mutual den, " and looking at yourself in the glass, and saying to me that you would be a beauty yet, and your words have come true—and who would have thought it?"

" You would not, at any rate, Morris; but I must be going upstairs."

" And your husband, Miss Ellen, is an officer in the Hussars away at the war! A young gentleman," and she grinned, " and good looking; very different to poor Mr.

Bellamy. Laws!" as if struck by some poignant recollection, " how he did carry on, to be sure! And you have a baby—I can't get over that. If your grandmamma lets bygones be bygones, I must just go over and see it. I dared not otherwise; she's that suspicious, and she knows everything."

I wondered if she knew about George and me, and Kant.

" Now, I can't stay any longer, Morris. Let me go upstairs and see grandmamma, for Mrs. Karslake will be returning."

I found my aged relative sitting in a deep chair in a dimly-lit room—the back drawing-room—evidently expecting me. She did not get up, nor even move, when I entered; but she adjusted her glasses and stared hard, and I found in my inmost heart I was still mortally afraid of her, and I was sorry I had come.

" Well, Ellen, you see a great change in me. Come over and sit down there"—pointing to a low seat—" and I see a great change in you. You are certainly a most beautiful young woman."

I felt apologetic, and was suffused with deep blushes. I did not like such broad compliments even from an old lady.

" You have all your career before you, and there is no greater power than beauty—use it well. I, on the other hand, am at the end of my little day, and I wish I had used it better. I am dying by inches of an incurable disease; by this time next year this place will know me no more. I shall have passed into the great silent land—but enough of this. I desire to see you, my only living kin, for the approach of death softens us all. I shall say nothing about the shock your running away gave me, and the *éclandre*, which chiefly fell on me. You married since to please yourself. I hope you are happy?"

She looked at me so steadfastly that, in spite of myself, I had to look away—nay, I did worse, I covered my face with my hands, and burst into tears.

" So that is it?" she said, slowly. " And what is the cause of the 'little rift'? Does he drink, or fight, or gamble? Has he a temper, or is it you? Surely, Ellen, it is not you?"

" It is I, or rather, it is all because of my father, grandmamma," speaking in a sudden burst of frankness. " I have always been terribly afraid of you, but am not so now. You are my father's mother—I am a mother myself—I wish to speak for him. He was innocent, and—oh! prepare for some strange news—he is alive! He is in England! He may be in London now!"

" Where?"

" I do not know. I saw him not long ago in the street. It was all through trying to help him that I have got into such terrible trouble with my husband. He—he left me for India, without one word of good-bye. He has taken no notice of the child. He is so angry with me that he will never forgive me!"

" And you say that Philip is alive?" she interrupted. " I must see him again—even him! But he is my only son. Poor Philip! What a life!"

" You may say so; especially as he was, and is, as innocent of that crime as you are. I know all about it, grandmamma," bringing my chair nearer, and laying my hand on hers. " If you will listen to me I will tell you the whole story—nay, two, his and mine."

" Yes, my dear, I'll listen," she said, leaning back, and closing her eyes.

Fancy grandmamma calling me my *dear*! Times were changed indeed!

I began at the very beginning, and, as clearly and fully as I could, gave her an outline of my visit to the castle, my visit to the graveyard and the bog, my acquaintance with Tom Kelly, with George, my marriage, and, finally, my awful experiences at Sandgate.

All the while, as I waxed more excited, more eager, more rapid in my flow of words, my listener never made even an ejaculation, merely shook her head, or nodded it, or opened her

eyes widely, when I told her something very startling.

At last I ended, lamely enough, with a protestation of my father's innocence, and she finally opened her eyes and looked at me keenly, and said,—

"Ellen, you are a good, faithful girl. I believe all you tell me. Your words have the stamp of truth. Yes, I go further, I believe in Philip too. Had you not been very certain of his innocence you would never have risked your all, as you have done, poor child, and lost. I am a changed, a stricken, old woman; the pomps and vanities of this world have fallen away from me, and many friends, and I now turn at last to my own, my flesh and blood. I often meant to write to you, often, but pride held back my pen. And yesterday, when you saw me, and looked so proud, and yet so frightened, with your baby at the window, I was glad pride let me speak. I must see much of you. Why should you not come here, I believe in you? I am your grandmother, who reared you—not very kindly. Live with me for the short remainder of my days!"

I dared not, and said so. Was I not bound over hand and foot, and delivered to my mother-in-law, and she was a slave to the child?

"Well, it's hard, very. Why should he tyrannise over you—you are independent?"

But I was not; I had not one shilling in the world of my own. It galled me to eat Mrs. Karslake's bread, live in her house, drive in her carriages; but where else could I have gone?

I had not bought a single new dress or bonnet all the months I had been with her. She had made some casual remark about this, and said that George said I was to have everything I wanted, and I had fiercely replied that "I wanted nothing."

Grandmamma recollected herself, and said,—

"Oh, I forgot! you have no pin money!"

"Yes, I have, but I shall never touch it."

"We are proud. I see," smiling, "the Deane pride. Well, you are my heiress, when all is said and done. If Philip returns I shall provide for him too; but to-morrow I shall pay five hundred pounds into Coutts' bank for you. A young married woman, even on the best of terms with her husband, feels all the pleasanter for a little loose cash; and get yourself a new bonnet, my dear," looking disapprovingly at my head gear.

"It is my best, grandmamma; don't you like it?"

"No."

"I went to baby's christening in it yesterday! We went for a little drive afterwards, and that is how we met you, you see."

"And pray what did you call the child?"

"George Philip."

"Ah! I'm glad to see you have the courage of your opinions; but what will your husband say?"

"I really don't know. It is my own opinion, in spite of Mrs. Karslake, that his son and heir is a very unpleasant surprise."

"Nonsense! An heir is always welcome to a title and a large property."

"It depends upon who is the heir's mother. At present George detests me. He told me so, and I see no way of ever disabusing his mind of its prejudice."

"All in good time; right will come at last."

"I used to think so. But look at my father; he has been waiting for right for twenty-one years!" I said, dismally.

"I shall put the matter in detective hands once more. Oh! why was I not referred to by you and your father; foolish amateurs, who walked into the very lion's den. If I had had that book and put it into proper hands all would have been well now. There is a ring—a carriage at the door. It's your mother-in-law. Of course I won't see her, I see no one. Give her my compliments though; tell her my health is wretched, and say that she must

spare you to me often—often. Stoop down and kiss me, Nellie. Dear me! what a nice, cool, fresh young face! Surely if George Karslake was to see it now he would never harbour one suspicious thought. Tell me honestly, Nellie, was it an *arrière pensée* of him that made you so cruelly jilt Mr. Bellamy?"

"No, grandmamma!" I cried, eagerly; "no, indeed. In those days George and I detested each other. He thought me a horrid girl, but I would rather he thought that than what he thinks now!"

"There, there, run away. I don't believe it's as bad as you fancy. Don't keep Mrs. Karslake waiting, and come back to me very soon—to-morrow if you can!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

As for affairs in India, all this time, there had been no severe fighting yet; for the moment grim-visaged war had smoothed his wrinkled front, and we fancied that we could catch faint, desultory notes, as from the pipes of piping peace, we were only too eager to believe in the truth of these charming sounds—lend a ready ear to a consummation so much to be desired.

There was a general resting on their oars as far as the force in Afghanistan was concerned. I had no need at present to be very anxious about George, and my mind was more at liberty to be very angry with him, and I was.

As time went on he did not condescend to take the slightest notice of "George Philip" by letter or message, even although in a sudden foolish, burst of maternal pride I had had his photo taken—when he had reached the ripe age of four months—and despatched a copy to India!

After it was gone I was very sorry I had sent it, but my regrets were too late and of no use. Who ever gets anything back from the post-office?

I went over to Park-lane constantly, was left there by my mother-in-law, and sent home in state in grandmamma's brougham. The distance was very trifling, and I could easily have walked, but neither of the old ladies would listen to the suggestion—Mrs. Karslake, because she was on her honour not to trust me out of her sight alone—grandmamma, because she considered me too young and pretty to walk about unattended.

She seemed to think a great deal of my visits now, and I really spent as much time with her as I could possibly spare. I read to her, told her all the little bits of chit-chat I could think of, collected from Miranda's lips at sundry meal-times. I set up her knitting, picked up dropped stitches, wrote her notes, did all her small commissions, brought her flowers, periodicals, new photos, and was as useful to her as I knew how to be. One thing alone she never could prevail on me to do—only one thing, and that was to open the piano, and sit down to it and sing.

"And you have such a good voice, child, and I'm so fond of music—singing especially; and, really, after the small fortune I spent upon your masters at Madame Duverne's you surely have not given it up?" very irritably.

"No, I used to sing a great deal at Sandgate. I was quite the regimental *prima donna*; but I have never sung, much less opened a piano, since last September."

"That's all sentimental rubbish!" snapped the old lady, with a spic of her ancient fire. "Just go over to the piano at once—I insist—and if you can't sing and won't sing, at least play. Play something soft and slow—it soothed me."

I obeyed, and placed my unpractised fingers on the keys, and gradually things came back to me. I played one or two of Schumann's shorter pieces—vague, melancholy, weird melodies—one or two of Mendelssohn's songs without words: played till "The brougham for Mrs. Karslake" interrupted me, and for the future half-an-hour at the piano was always a portion of my duties at grandmamma's.

It was August before we left town; Miranda wished to see the season out to the bitter end, and many and many a weary night did she keep her unlucky old mother out of bed till it was daylight, convoying her from one crowded party to another.

I was well out of it all. When they were preparing to sail forth I was preparing to retire for the night; and when Miranda appeared at luncheon next day she generally looked as cross as two sticks, and as yellow as a lemon, and made nothing but uncomplimentary remarks about the preceding evening's entertainment.

It was often on the tip of my tongue to say "Then why do you go?" but fortunately I refrained. Miranda had a temper like her brother, and in a serious war of words I would be nowhere.

She was handsome, in a cold, hard, dark style, and I should have as soon have thought of marrying a fly-blister if I were a man.

I was extremely glad to get away from hot, glaring, stifling London to the nice shady, green country; but grandmamma was in a dreadful state of mind at my departure. She made me solemnly promise to return from time to time and see her, and this I promised to do if Mrs. Karslake had no objection.

She ruled me as George's deputy; but I must admit that I did not feel my bonds press very heavily. I, on my part, ruled her by means of George, junior, and I did not want to go to dances, and dinners, or the theatre.

I never languished for gaiety; I was now as staid and as subdued as any old woman of seventy, so that being kept in the background fell in with my own wishes and Miranda's. Miranda had no desire that I should ever shine by her side in the social circle.

I knew this, and when people were expected to lunch, or dropped in to afternoon tea, I never appeared. Down in the country it was different; I liked the more open, easy life. I no longer lived in my very own sitting-room, like a bear in a cage; I spent most of my time out-of-doors, coming in and out as I pleased, and falling more into my place, and, into general view, as one of the family.

Karslake was the name of the place—a fine old country seat, quite buried in a park five miles from a station, and a mile from the church and village. It belonged to Sir Anthony, George's uncle, who never lived in it himself, and kindly lent it to Mrs. Karslake for any time she pleased.

Miranda could not bear it. It was too quiet and dull for her, though we had a good many county neighbours—too rural, too far from town; and as I had never heard much about it I was most agreeably amazed when I made its acquaintance.

The house was old and rather ugly. A variety of owners had added to it, and improved (?) it to their individual taste; but it was very large and comfortable, and, for such a big place, homelike. The park, spreading far away all round, was charming; the gardens delicious.

I really began to feel something like myself again, as, with a big hat on my head and only a dog for company, I roamed about the place, made raids upon the flower-beds, or sat under a big haycock reading the last new novel!

We had company. Carriages full of visitors came darting, wending up the long avenue, that curled like a big grey serpent through the park; but Mrs. Karslake and Miranda entertained them. I think my existence was barely guessed at, for I did not go to church with the family, and appear in that public place—the family pew.

I allowed baby's nurse to go in the morning, along with the upper servants, and I went alone, in the afternoon, walking across the fields, in the cool time of the day, and sitting, not in the big Karslake pew, but in one of the free sittings. I did not identify myself in public with the family.

There were various junkettings, in which I took no part, tennis and garden-parties. On

these occasions I made it a point to keep well out of the way.

I'm sure I was not missed, and I learnt, indirectly (long afterwards), that in answer to any casual polite inquiries, my fair Miranda always said that "her sister-in-law was an invalid, and could not bear society."

When one of Miranda's "afternoons" was impending, I generally took a book, and set out, immediately after luncheon, for a long stroll through the woods, resting at intervals in different chosen spots.

One particular day, about five o'clock, I was sitting on the steps of an old time-ruined tea-room, or temple, with my hat off, my dog making a mat of my dress, and my whole attention absorbed in a thrilling story. All at once I heard distant sounds of high sopranos, laughing and talking, and one or two muffled basses responding thereto.

Could it be the garden-party coming up, all the way to the Folly, merely for the sake of having nothing else to do?

I started up, aghast. There was no escape for me, for the only pathway leading to my hitherto sacred retreat was already occupied, and I was cut off.

I rushed up the steps, and into the old tea-room, which possessed a big rustic table and half-a-dozen chairs, and, seating myself at the further side of it, put on my hat, pulled it well over my face, and, resting my elbows on the table, pretended to be deeply buried in my book, but, of course, I was listening hard.

Sound ascends; the Folly was on the top of a little hill, and the path to it made the very most of itself by winding round and round.

Voices were distinctly audible, and one well-known one, especially (Miranda), was evidently leading the van.

"Oh, she roams about; we never mind her, or miss her!"

(Who was she?)

"Is she a presentable person?" This from a man with an accent of vague curiosity.

"Oh! it's quite a matter of taste! I do not admire her style—and she is most eccentric—but I fancy men do."

"I should like to see her, and see if I am to be one of the men," said the man.

At this instant he reached the top of the incline, ditto his partner, and he walked up the steps, saying,—

"By Jove! that's a pretty stiff pull!"

And then he turned, and entered, and was face to face with me.

I was not nervous now, and not nearly as much put out as Miranda.

She looked desperately annoyed, and would have carried him away, but quite a crowd of men, and maidens, were hurrying up the steps after her. Perhaps they had visions of a delightful surprise in the shape of tea and ices!

It was in for a penny in for a pound, as far as I was concerned.

"You here, Ellen! How very odd!" she exclaimed, with a curious laugh. "I'm sorry we have invaded your sweet solitude; but we will go," turning to the crowd, with a playful gesture of dismissal.

"Certainly not! Pray don't dream of such a thing, on my account!" standing up, and, to my amazement, seeing a familiar face in the crowd—Amy Norton that was, now a rich, well-dowered widow. Mr. Sharp had been so kind as to give her her freedom within less than a year of their marriage.

She hurried over, as if we had been bosom friends, and accosted me with rapture.

"So delighted to see you, dear Mrs. Karslake; how well you are looking!" kissing me, before I had time to take breath. "I hope you have good news from Major Karslake?"

Here was effrontery!

"He is quite well, thank you," I said, evasively.

"And your dear little boy? I must see him—and when did you hear from Glenmore and the dear Maxwells? Nay, Maxwells no longer; we have all"—(with a simper)—"changed our names since."

Her train of reflections was broken in upon by Miranda, who said to me very brusquely, as if she were throwing the remark at my head,—

"Ellen, Colonel Moore wishes to be introduced to you—Colonel Moore, Mrs. George Karslake."

He was the man who had entered first, and found the hill so steep; and yet he had no need, for he was thin and spare, and looked very young to be a colonel. He had very blue eyes, and a short fair moustache, and a very clean-looking face. I know what I mean myself, but cannot describe the *tout ensemble* better. As I stood at the table I noticed that I—in my garden hat and rather tumbled (though clean on that morning) white gown—was the cynosure of every eye. The ladies stared at me with unaffected, hard curiosity, the men with, shall I say respectful, admiration, tempered with surprise. I was introduced to several of both sexes by Miranda in a kind of angry gabble.

I had now come out into society with a vengeance, though not intentionally. Half the neighbourhood had now seen "her eccentric sister-in-law," and, to judge by their looks, they did not see anything eccentric about me. Several made polite inquiries about my absent husband and my baby—how long I had been home, and how I liked the country; and then there was a general move, and I was swept away with the crowd back to the tennis ground and tea-tables.

Colonel Moore and another man had a polite struggle as to who should walk with me, and it ended in a compromise. I had the escort of both—one on either hand. We were rather a tight fit going down the narrow pathway between laurel and rhododendron and lawnshines, but luckily we were all slim.

"I am very glad to have the pleasure of meeting you, Mrs. Karslake," said Colonel Moore. Your husband is a great friend of mine. When did you hear from him last?"

This was, indeed, a poser. I'm sure I became scarlet, but I fancy that my two companions did not notice my sudden confusion—they were looking straight ahead. So after a momentary hesitation I said what was strictly true.

"Not for some time."

"I've just come back from India," said Colonel Moore, who was full of conversation, "invalided, though you wouldn't think it to look at me. The sea voyage has me up. I was down with fever; for weeks and weeks Karslake nursed me—we were in the same column—and I can't tell you how good he was to me. I've been out there so long, I'm quite out of it in the way of news; and, as he never mentioned the fact, I never knew that he was married till to-day when I came over here, and heard Miss Karslake speak of her sister-in-law. I'm sure you will think it odd," with a laugh, "but Karslake is one of your reserved fellows, and never talks of his own affairs, and being an aide-de-camp to the general—a regular bachelor's billet—you see I never guessed it," all this in a semi-apologetic manner.

"I suppose not," I faltered, feebly. What else was I to say.

"At any rate, I'm delighted to meet you, Mrs. Karslake. I need not tell you what a good fellow your husband is, nor how popular, you know all that; but I'm glad of a chance of telling you how awfully kind he was to me—used to sit up with me night after night; and that's no joke in tents, especially when he had hard work all day." He paused for breath, and I muttered something inaudible, "Meant to say I was very glad that George had had the opportunity," &c.

Meanwhile my left-hand escort had never had a chance of getting in a single word, and I turned to him with relief—he did not know George—and made some original remark about the weather. This led to tennis and other topics, but presently Colonel Moore struck in again.

"The amusing thing is, Mrs. Karslake,

that we all made up our minds that Karslake had had what's called a disappointment, he is such a grave sort of a fellow. But now, of course, I account for his grave looks in another fashion—you can guess what I mean," with a complimentary and significant smile.

"I really cannot, I assure you," with my usual candour.

"Why, at being separated from you, of course; and I really don't wonder that he has such an absent air at times. I can quite understand it now," in a tone of serious concern.

Poor man! poor Colonel Moore! Little did he know what he was talking about.

I said nothing. Silence is safe, silence is golden, and my silence was only broken by our arrival at the tea-tables spread under fine large elms near the tennis ground, and covered with all manner of inviting dainties—strawberries and cream, tea and coffee, ices, hot cakes, sweet cakes, apricots, short bread, etc. Everyone seemed cheerful at the prospect.

I sat down in a wicker chair near one of these tables, and to my surprise Miranda suggested that I should pour out tea. I had very serious doubts about mixing with the company at all. I ought to have strayed away down a side walk and escaped. I was not dressed for the part. I glanced about at all the girls and young married women in such pretty, fashionable, fresh costumes, and felt myself quite beneath the occasion and a dowdy, but I could not run away now, so I drew up a chair and commenced my allotted task.

My mother-in-law, who now arrived with three other old ladies in tow—old ladies, to whom, I am perfectly certain, she had been introducing her grandson, now gazed at me spell-bound with astonishment, but eventually accepted the situation and a cup of tea.

I heard Colonel Moore going up to her and saying,—

"I am so glad to meet Mrs. George Karslake. I've been telling her all about George, and how good he has been. You know we were schoolfellows, and I have also impressed upon her how fearfully down he is on his luck, and how he misses her!"

I did not venture to look at my mother-in-law during this awkward speech. I only humbly trusted that she would be able to command her countenance. My face I'm certain was what is known as all colours; and yet why, I said to myself, angrily, should I blush? In my secret soul I had no cause of shame. I now felt, without actually turning round, that someone had softly subsided into the seat beside mine—a lady who used quite a half-pint of perfume on her handkerchief—Mrs. Sharp, née Lily Norton. She accosted me in a sweet voice, saying,—

"Dear Mrs. Karslake, I want a nice little chat with you so much. I am so fond of talking of old times. How well you are looking!" she added, deliberately, "and you look so ridiculously young. Now, pray," with a little complacent laugh, "how do you find me?"

"You are looking remarkably well," I said, surveying her calmly. She was a pretty woman, in a fair, small, hard style. There were no blushes, or dimples, or quick changes of expression in her face—it always wore the same. She was magnificently dressed, and I am not certain, after I had scrutinised her closely, that her complexion was not slightly artistic. "I never saw you looking better!" I added, politely.

"Oh, dear, don't say that!" throwing up her pale grey gloves. "I've had great troubles, as you know, dear. Dear Robert's death (leaving her indisputable mistress of a large fortune, and money her god) was a fearful blow. He was much older than me, you know—not quite, to you I may say it, the husband for a young girl who was all heart!" (What nonsense was this?) "I made a mistake," shaking her head, dolefully. "But we need not talk of it now. We are all"—looking hard at me—"liable to make mistakes in the most important crisis of our lives—the bestowal of ourselves in marriage. Men make these fearful blunders, too; don't you think so?"

"No doubt," I said, laconically, as I filled up two cups, and wished from the bottom of my soul she would go away and take her confidences elsewhere; but no, she leant over me and said,—

"Now, that is the very last, I see. Do, do come along under those nice trees over there, and indulge me in a *tête-à-tête*. It has been such an unexpected pleasure to see you! Do you know that I have taken a little country place not far from here? I shall expect you to visit me often. There is nothing like the friends of one's girlhood."

But this was all rubbish. I knew it, and she also knew it. Our acquaintance had been of the slightest.

She had no occasion to prosecute my society then. Query: What did she want now?

I found myself pacing along the grass with her presently alone, she, to my disgust, leaning heavily on my reluctant arm.

"I was so amused at poor, dear Colonel Moore talking in that unfortunate way about you and George," she said, smilingly.

What right had she to call him George?

"Of course he has been abroad so long, poor man! He is out of everything, and doesn't know," significantly.

"Know what?" I asked, my heart beating very fast, indeed.

"What every one else knows, my sweet child, that," now speaking in a lower key, "you and George don't get on—"

"You have no reason to say so," I said in my most chilling manner.

"No, but I have the privilege of an old friend. Ah, my dear, my dear! I am truly sorry for you!—sorry for myself, and sorry for him," she proceeded, with emphatic gravity.

"Pray explain yourself."

"I will," she said, insidiously. "You see, you know, I was engaged to George, and he was madly in love with me. In a moment of girlish caprice I changed my mind, and have regretted it ever since—yes, ever since," shaking her head up and down.

"But I think you should keep the expression of your regrets from me, his wife," I said, very stiffly, and I now found that there was a vast reservoir of latent jealousy in my disposition.

The idea of this woman daring to tell me to my face that she was exceedingly sorry she had not married George made me feel very odd and very angry; but worse was coming.

"And that's not all," she continued, in a tearful voice. "He, poor fellow! never got over it! I have reason to know that he rushed into marriage with you, whom, you remember, when you were at Glenmore, he could not bear, and it has all recoiled on his own head. A marriage without love, as I found to my cost, is misery!" and she sighed like a furnace, and cast down her eyes affectedly.

I now took her hand firmly away from my arm, and stopped, and surveyed her for several seconds.

I felt so angry, in such a passion, I was nearly choked. I tried to put a constraint on myself, but when I spoke my voice shook in a most undignified manner. Any one could see that I was in a rage.

"Do you wish to infer that George married me purely out of pique, and that—I wonder you have the face to hint it—he loves you still?"

She made no answer verbally; but a smile of intense self-satisfaction said "yes" in capital letters.

"Pray disabuse your mind of such a notion, for it is a foolish and groundless one. George married me for love, and nothing else. He had long ceased to think of you."

"Doubtless he told you so. It was but natural. Men's vows, we know, are writ in sand. I can show hard facts. You cannot deny that he was desperately in love with me once, and hated you!" looking me full in the face with her hard, light eyes.

"No, I'm quite prepared to admit that; but

you will allow the adage, 'Soon hot, soon cold,' and another, that 'There is nothing like beginning with a little aversion.'

"Old sayings have nothing to do with this. I wrecked my own happiness. I am the pivot of your destinies."

Here was arrogance!

"I wrecked his happiness also, and, indirectly, yours. Think as you please; a man like him never gives his love twice, much less twice within a year. I'm not telling you all this from a mere idle spirit of mischief. I'm only moralising—sadly moralising. Of course, had he not married you all would be well now; but fate has been against us all three. You do not care for George. You married him to escape poverty and to have a comfortable home over your head. A little bird whispered to me that you made George very jealous, and that he had left you in anger for ever."

"Pardon me, madam; on that point you are quite misinformed, and I beg to add that such utter, wanton impertinence, such gratuitous insolence, and such barefaced, openly-avowed love for a married man was never heard before!"

"You cannot deny what I have said," she said, in a blustering manner, her pale face red with passion. "It is all true."

"You may think so; but it is of no consequence," I replied, now becoming cooler as she waxed furious. "I am really at a loss to know what you mean or what you want by bringing me here and pouring out all this malice into my ear."

"If you had received my confidence in the spirit in which it was intended you would have known I had my reasons. I would have put you on your guard for old times' sake. After all, if I don't tell you some one else will (unable to resist the temptation). Major Karslake, you know, went up on two months' leave to Murree, and the whole place was ringing with talk about him and a doctor's wife.

"He flirted scandalously. If you don't believe me ask him some day about Mrs. Arthur Thorn, and how she ran away from her husband, and who she ran away to.

"I see your people moving, so I must hurry back. George is your husband, not mine. I strongly advise you to bring him to book. These designing married women when they get hold of a young man with plenty of money generally make a nice fool of him. Forewarned is forearmed. Don't be furious. I'm speaking for your good. Good-bye!"

(To be continued.)

THE TELETOPOMETER.—An ingenious instrument for ascertaining the distances of accessible and inaccessible points from the observer and from each other has been invented by Dr. Luigi Cerebotani, a professor of the University of Verona. This apparatus consists mainly of a pair of telescopes mounted on a stand and fixed on a tripod for use. The telescopes are both brought to bear on the object, and a reading is then taken from a graduated scale on the instrument, which compared with a set of printed tables gives the distance. By this means the inventor obviates the necessity for the base line, which has hitherto had to be laid down in these operations, and he dispenses with all trigonometrical calculations. Distances can be measured between far-off objects, and by means of a sheet of paper fixed on a drawing-board a rough plan of the country under measurement can be sketched. In the same way the distances of ships at sea or of moving objects of land can be determined. The apparatus appears to be well adapted for land surveying, and particularly for military purposes. In fact, it is stated to have been already adopted in the German army in the latter connection, and it is about to be tried by the authorities of our War Department. A practical trial has been made with this instrument on the Thames Embankment, when its varied usefulness was demonstrated.

WANTED AN HEIRESS.

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CHAPTER XXV.—(continued).

"You have made a damaging statement," Mr. Massy said, menacingly. "Unless you are in a position to prove it you will have to pay dearly for troubling the peace of my household."

"As a gentleman and a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England, my word may safely be taken," returned the Rector, with mild, unexpected dignity. "I am willing to make all due allowance for the grief and profound annoyance that our disclosure has inflicted upon you. At the same time I must remind you that my daughter and I are equally the victims of this man's heartless duplicity. Your best plan will be to acquaint Arthur Joscelyn with what you have just heard, and ask him if he can deny it."

"I beg your pardon," said the other, quick to acknowledge the reason and the rebuke contained in the Rector's words. "I was not justified in adopting such a tone. If I doubted you it was partly through my reluctance to believe in the villainy of the man I have trusted so implicitly. Great Heaven! how shall I ever recompense him for the harm and misery he has wrought?"

"Rest assured that his sin will bring its own punishment. He is one of those who win confidence only to betray it. Unless he adopts a very different policy, the wealth he has lately inherited will fail to bring him any lasting happiness," observed the Reverend Mr. Dare.

"Wealth," repeated Gwendoline, her drowning hopes catching at the merest straw. "Arthur—Mr. Joscelyn is no longer wealthy. Owing to recent losses he is comparatively a poor man."

"He was poor once," corrected Ethel. "Less than a year ago, having squandered his large fortune, he was subsisting upon borrowed money. Sir Algernon Camoy's death has placed him once more in the receipt of a large yearly income."

"Papa, what does it all mean?" cried Gwendoline, pressing her hand to her burning forehead. "Am I awake or dreaming?"

"The hound! he has practised a double deceit upon us," said Percival Massy, sternly. "He represented himself to me as a wealthy man, when seeking to obtain my consent to the engagement. Then, only a few weeks ago, he came to me offering to release my daughter from the promise to marry him by reason of the poverty that had overtaken him—the result of unsuccessful speculations. He described the estate left him by his uncle, the baronet, as almost worthless. What lying spirit can have taken possession of him?"

Even Ethel could not answer this question. She failed to comprehend Joscelyn's motive for pleading poverty when in the fresh enjoyment of a large fortune.

The financier was not a demonstrative man, yet his brow clouded, his eye flashed, as he beheld the drooping form, the blanched, sorrow-stricken face of his only child. It would have gone ill with Arthur Joscelyn had he appeared among them at that moment.

"Why, some of these dates are comparatively recent!" he remarked, as he turned over the letters which Ethel had silently submitted to him.

"Yes," was the reply. "Mr. Joscelyn has corresponded with me more or less regularly up to the present time."

Gwendoline bowed her head in speechless misery on receiving yet another proof of the worthless, dishonourable nature of the man with whom she had looked forward to sharing her life.

Joscelyn had come to her again and again, fresh from writing love-letters and making fond vows to another woman. Surely her cup of bitterness was full; it could hold no more!

Rising abruptly she took up one of the letters and glanced at the form of address.

"My darling Ethel!"

"It is the name he repeated when recovering consciousness after his accident at Geneva," she remarked, with the calmness born of despair. "I taxed him with it, and he only gave me an evasive reply, that I knew could not be the right one. This alone would be sufficient to prove his guilt."

"Is he knave or madman?" demanded Percival Massey. "His conduct savours of both conditions."

The answer came from the quarter whence it was least expected, viz., from Gwendoline.

"May not Mr. Joscelyn's poverty and your reputed wealth, papa, have first caused him to swerve from the allegiance he owed to this lady?" she suggested, her large sad eyes fixed upon her father's face. "I can remember many incidents, trifling in themselves, and almost forgotten until now, which serve to render this idea extremely probable. His motive in becoming engaged to me was evidently an interested one—his love was only feigned. There have been times when a careless word or look from him well-nigh destroyed my trust, and set me wondering. Now, by the strong light thrown upon his past, I can see that he has never loved me. My fortune, not myself, formed the principal attraction in his eyes."

"Gwendoline," interrupted her father, his proud spirit chafing under the insult and the deceit implied, "you are not just to yourself when you say this."

"It is the truth, papa," she continued, "however painful it may be to confess. I cannot be mistaken; it is all so clear and palpable. If he had loved me, would he have sought, by means of another falsehood, to break off our marriage on becoming once more a rich man? He had only regarded it as a necessary evil which his wealth, when it came, made him anxious to avoid. I think," she faltered, turning to Ethel, "that you have held the first place in his affections right throughout the piece. If he had but told me this, and thrown himself upon my mercy, I would freely have pardoned him, and set him at liberty. But to deceive me thus, oh! it was cruel—cruel!"

The frank humility contained in this avowal, made as it was in a moment of extreme suffering and painful disillusion, touched and softened Ethel as no scorn or incredulity would have been capable of doing.

She had come to the Laurels expecting to meet with proud disdain or angry recrimination. She had encountered instead a gentle, broken-hearted girl, willing even in the midst of her own great sorrow to acknowledge Ethel's prior claim upon Arthur Joscelyn, betraying no symptoms of feminine spite or enmity against a rival who had been the means of destroying all her happiness.

Under similar circumstances Ethel knew that she would not have been capable of displaying such generosity and forbearance.

The feeling of pity and liking for Gwendoline that was already making itself felt within her deepened as the fact of her own inferiority to the girl she had once hated forced itself upon her notice.

Impulsive in all that she said or did, she went up to Gwendoline and took both her hands.

"Will you forgive me for the sorrow I have brought upon you?" she said, earnestly. "I came here in a bitter, angry mood, dwelling only upon the wrong I had endured, careless of the pain my disclosure might inflict upon others. You have received it in a manner so different to what I had anticipated. You have been so cruelly wronged yourself, and yet so patient withal, that I cannot but admire and respect you for it. I put it to you in all sincerity, could I have acted otherwise?"

"No," replied Gwendoline, faintly. "In your case there is nothing to forgive. Our wrongs are equal. You will excuse me if I leave you now. I am not well."

A loud knock and ring, followed by a well-known voice speaking to the servant below,

caused Ethel's pale face to grow a shade paler, while Gwendoline clung to the mantelpiece for support.

"Papa, it is he," she gasped. "I cannot, I will not see him!"

Percival Massey pointed to the inner drawing-room.

"Oblige me by retiring there for a few moments," he said, hurriedly to his visitors. "I wish to bring him face to face with you unexpectedly. Gwendoline, you must stay with me."

He had scarcely closed the folding-doors upon Ethel and her father when the footman threw open the other, and announced "Mr. Joscelyn."

CHAPTER XXVI.

ARTHUR JOSCELYN, well-dressed, handsome debonair as ever entered the drawing-room, carrying in his hand a bouquet of cyclamen, white hyacinth, and narcissus, intended for Gwendoline.

Anticipating a tender reception, which would bore him a little, but to which he must submit, something in Gwendoline's unresponsive attitude, and the lowering expression on her father's face, struck him as being unusual.

In the act of crossing the room to where his fiancée stood to present her with the lace-papered bouquet, Percival Massey intercepted him.

"Before you approach Miss Massey I have a question to put to you," he remarked, in a tone of icy courtesy, that gave no index to the lava-flood of rage boiling below it.

Arthur merely bowed, and strove to hide the astonishment that he felt. What could have transpired to effect such a change in the financier's bearing, to prevent Gwendoline from coming forward to meet him, he inwardly wondered.

The fact must be damaging indeed that could produce such a result, and yet he knew there were several facts in his past life which, if disclosed, would be quite sufficient to put a stop to his approaching marriage.

"I appeal to your sense of honour," continued Percival Massey, emphasising the noun in a manner not to be mistaken, "to tell me whether any previous engagement entered into by you before making my daughter's acquaintance really exists, rendering it impossible for you to become her husband, and to retain your character as a gentleman and a man of unsullied integrity at the same time?"

"It is rather late in the day to throw such impediments, real or fancied, in the way of our marriage," contested Joscelyn, conscious that some disclosure had taken place, yet uncertain as to its extent, and determined not to incriminate himself. "My honour need hardly have been called into question so pointedly. To boy-and-girl attachments I must, in common with scores of other men, plead guilty, but not to anything more serious."

Percival Massey bent upon him a glance of withering disdain, beneath which he felt extremely uncomfortable, as he stood there gnawing his moustache, and waiting for the next move upon the board.

His reputation in society had become of importance to him lately, since succeeding to Sir Algernon's estate. Public opinion, unvalued in his shifty, adventurous days, was now precious in his sight, and he feared that, through the agency of some person unknown, he was about to have a black mark affixed to his name.

"I have behaved fairly towards you," observed the financier, with a gesture expressive of profound contempt. "I have invited you frankly and manfully to confess the duplicity of which you have been guilty towards others beside my daughter and myself, and you have refused to do so. You prefer heaping lie upon lie, and no further consideration can be shown towards you. Since you evince no respect for yourself, others cannot possibly entertain

such a feeling towards you any longer. The presence of this lady and gentleman may, perhaps, induce you to tell a very different story. To them you can hardly assert your Arcadian innocence in the matter of previous engagements."

He threw open the folding-doors as he spoke, and released Ethel and her father from their brief imprisonment.

"Ethel, by Jove!" exclaimed the astonished young man.

Pale, tearless, coldly defiant, exulting in her victory, yet intensely miserable, the girl he loved confronted Arthur Joscelyn steadily. Before her flashing eyes his own fell in conscious guilt.

"This is your doing!" he said, involuntarily, the true state of affairs dawning upon him, and enabling him to understand the meaning of a woman's vengeance.

"It is," she replied, briefly, placing her hand on her father's arm, and looking with real compassion to where Gwendoline, with half-averted face, stood listening to all that was said.

"Ah! you recognise Miss Dare, then?" observed Percival Massey in the same strain of terrible, ironical courtesy. "You engaged yourself to her, I believe, at a time when your fortunes were none of the brightest. Without breaking off the first engagement you formed another with my daughter, keeping up a double correspondence meanwhile, and otherwise proving yourself to be a scoundrel of the first water. You have twice deceived me with regard to your income, purposely exaggerating it in the first instance, and underrating it in the second. Can you deny any of these statements? I shall be happy to listen to a well-grounded self-defence, and to regain my former high opinion of you."

Apparently Arthur Joscelyn had no defence to set up. Shame, anger, astonishment, and a strange contradictory feeling akin to relief kept him silent.

"Ethel, my dear, we shall be thankful to have this painful scene brought to an end," said the Rector, rising to the occasion with a dignity due more to his sacred calling than to himself personally. "Mr. Joscelyn's dishonest, heartless conduct has placed him beyond the pale of our sympathies. He richly merits his present embarrassing position. What action Miss Massey's father may think proper to take against him I cannot tell. So far as you and I alone are concerned, he need fear nothing beyond the just contempt, the ignoring of all friendly relations in the past, already meted out towards him."

"I am the last man living to expose my private and domestic affairs to the world's inquisitive gaze," responded Percival Massey, haughtily. "I shall follow the example set by you, sir, and abstain from any legal action. It would only tend to increase the harm and annoyance already wrought. But, without lifting the curtain completely as regards myself, society shall learn the true character of one who has too long imposed upon it. To unmask an adventurer is a duty. In this case, it may be regarded in the light of a pleasure also. Mr. Joscelyn, you will oblige me by quitting my house at once. Any attempt on your part to annoy my daughter by publishing an original version, intended to justify yourself, of the circumstances leading to your engagement being broken off, will end in personal chastisement."

"Take care, sir, or you may go too far in thus passing sentence upon me," cried Joscelyn, defiantly. "I admit that I have done wrong, and acted in a manner incompatible with a strict sense of honour; nevertheless, when summing up the principal facts against me, you might take into consideration the unfavourable circumstances that first induced me, much against my will, to adopt such a crooked policy."

"Knaves and cowards are always addicted to fatalism in some form," rejoined Percival Massey. "They strive to throw the onus of their own evil deeds on to destiny or circum-

stance, instead of accepting their liability with a courage that might help to redeem the want of principle shown. No man is compelled to enter upon a career of dishonour, and to write himself liar and adventurer as you have done."

"You have less ground for complaint than others," reminded Joscelyn sullenly. "It was my intention to stow so far as I could for the deception practised upon Miss Massey by making her my wife, rather than unconvincing her at the expense of considerable suffering. If I could not return her love at least I was never blind to its worth, and I would have striven to make an attentive husband when once we were married."

"Fortunately this sacrifice on your part is unnecessary," said the financier. "I have nothing more to say to you. Oblige me by leaving the house."

Unable to endure any longer, Gwendoline glided towards the door, conscious only of a wild longing to escape.

The sweet, sad, averted face, the silence that spoke so eloquently of a heart well-nigh breaking, affected Arthur Joscelyn far more than the reproaches he had received from the others present.

Remembering her love, her unvarying gentleness, the constancy and unselfish devotion she had displayed under his pretended losses, a feeling of keen remorse took possession of him.

"Gwendoline, won't you say a forgiving word to me?" he cried, as she passed him by; "won't you try to forgive me for the wrong I have done? Think in what relation we stood to each other only yesterday! I deeply regret the misery that I have inflicted upon one so good and gentle; upon my soul I do!"

She made him no reply; indeed, she was unable to do so. On reaching the door she stumbled and nearly fell. Joscelyn sprang forward to her assistance, but Percival Massey was too quick for him.

"Excuse me for leaving you to conduct my daughter to her room," he said, turning to the Rector, while supporting Gwendoline. "This scene has been too much for her. I will rejoin you immediately."

The father and daughter had scarcely disappeared when Joscelyn assumed the offensive towards Ethel, none the less fiercely because he loved her where he only respected Gwendoline.

"You might have spared me this humiliating scene," he said, angrily. "Could you not have gained your end by means less painful to all concerned? An appeal to me would have answered the purpose just as well. I am surprised that you should have preferred seeking redress at the hands of Mr. Massey."

"Have you been extremely solicitous with regard to the wounded, outraged feelings of others?" demanded Ethel, scornfully.

"Perhaps not. If you imagine that you have done me a grievous injury, however, you are greatly mistaken. It is hardly decent to make such a speech in this house after what has just transpired. But I cannot refrain from spoiling your triumph by assuring you that far from causing me life-long disappointment and loss you have unconsciously played into my hands, and effected what my own efforts failed to bring about."

"It is false!" cried Ethel.

"It is not false, you beautiful vixen! Believe me or not, as you will, I have always loved you, and you alone. But for my poverty I should never have played you false, or made proposals to Miss Massey. When my wealth came I lied again in the effort to obtain my freedom, that I might make you my wife. Her constancy and devotion, that I so little deserved, baffled me and kept me to my word. But for your disclosure I should have done her the injustice of marrying her without love. You have saved me from that, and, if you could only have brought about this result in a way less painful to Miss Massey, and less

prejudicial to myself, I should have thanked you for your timely intervention."

There was a boastful ring in his voice, but the words spoken were strictly truthful. Instinct assured Ethel of this, yet pride and anger steered her heart against the culprit.

"Love, without principle or honour, is but a poor gift to place at a woman's feet," she replied, with unabated scorn; "do you think I would stoop to accept it, knowing you as I do, aware of the misery you have just inflicted upon that gentle, sensitive girl, who loved and trusted you implicitly? Your weak, vacillating wickedness has ruined her happiness, and rendered you hateful in my sight. I can only request you to leave us both undisturbed for the future, and to bear your past experience in mind when next you favour a woman by proposing to bestow your name upon her."

"Ethel, say no more, I beseech you," interposed the Rector; "your words are merely thrown away."

"Certainly I have had enough of them for the present," replied Joscelyn, bitterly. "You are all down upon me, not without reason. But there are limits, even to my endurance, and I had better go."

He took his hat and went, greatly to the relief of the others, leaving the bouquet to wither unnoticed on side-table.

Percival Massey, on his return to the drawing-room, invited the Dares to have some luncheon with him before leaving. The invitation, as he had almost expected, was declined courteously, but firmly. The train they wished to return by would leave in less than half-an-hour, the Rector declared.

A polite, formal leave-taking ensued between the financier and his unwelcome visitors, the latter being as glad to escape as he was to get rid of them.

It would be hard to say which felt the most miserable, Ethel or Arthur Joscelyn.

The one had gained his coveted freedom under circumstances that robbed it of all enjoyment, and rendered it of no avail, the woman he loved having repudiated and openly cast him off. The other was already beginning to discover that revenge, although sweet at the time, leaves a bitter taste in the mouth, and brings its own punishment later on.

The knowledge that Joscelyn had never ceased to love her, that poverty alone had shaken his allegiance, seemed to weaken her cause against him, and mitigate the anger she had previously felt.

She strove to repress any regret concerning the result she had been instrumental in bringing about, any feeling of yielding or pity towards the culprit himself, on the ground that she had acted rightly, and as the occasion demanded. Nevertheless, she was in anything but a pleasant frame of mind when the train reached Combe-Appleton.

And Gwendoline?

Prone upon the floor of her room, praying for strength with which to bear the crushing blow inflicted on her, lay the girl who had risen only that morning full of joy and gladness, her thoughts bent on her approaching marriage.

Unused as she was to sorrow she found it doubly hard to bear. Under its heavy hand she cried out pitifully in hurt surprise, deeming it strange that such a visitation should befall her, she whose path had hitherto been rose-strewn, radiant with sunshine, vibrating with song.

Had Arthur Joscelyn died while her confidence reposed in him was still unshaken her sorrow would have been less poignant. She would have looked forward then to a glad meeting with him in the great hereafter.

But to know that he still lived, and that he had never loved her, or been worthy of her love in return was a far worse blow. It blotted out both past and future. She had lost him, and yet she could not mourn for him; her ideal lover had never existed save in her own fond fancy, and yet she could not at once tear the unworthy reality from her tortured heart.

It was her fortune that had prompted his offer of marriage, and each softly-spoken assurance of love and lifelong devotion—nothing else.

Oh! how she loathed the money that had helped to bring this misery upon her! Had she been poor she would not have been worth his while to practice such deceit upon her, and to win her heart, only to break it in the end.

Calling to mind each frank avowal of love made by herself, and the manner in which she had unconsciously held him to his engagement when striving to free himself from it on the plea of poverty, she hid her crimson face in her hands, and sobbed afresh in womanly shame. Had ever love and confidence been so cruelly misplaced before!

She could not see far into the future, or comprehend why a thing greatly desired should be withheld to permit of a far nobler gift being granted in the end. It is so hard

"To find in loss a gain to match,
And reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears."

Had anyone, excepting her father, ever loved her for herself alone, she wondered, in those first moments of bitter awakening!

Like a gleam of sunshine rending a cloudy sky, came the memory of Vincent Eyre's rugged, passionate wooing, and earnest, manly declaration of love.

She closed her eyes against it, however, and refused to be consoled.

"No doubt, in his case, as in the other, my money was the object desired," she reflected, with a bitterness and injustice foreign to her gentle nature. Vincent Eyre at least had never wronged her.

"I wish I could die," she moaned, wearily. "I am so tired of life. It can never hold any joy for me again."

The rain was on the roof, and young hearts, hearing the steady downpour, despairing of any break in the grey clouds, forgot to watch for the infalling sunlight, and the spring flowers of which that rain is the gracious earnest.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VINCENT EYRE sat at breakfast, surrounded by what Richard scornfully termed his menagerie, supplemented by the landlady's three boys, making in all quite a family party.

The menagerie consisted of a tame sparrow that had fallen from its nest when young and partly fledged; the cat from next door, that had come in through the window, and deliberately quartered herself upon the doctor when her people went away, and a bulldog that Vincent had found in the street, starved and dying, with a broken leg.

Their unerring instinct taught them to rely upon the strong, kind, merciful nature of the man who had given them a shelter. As if conscious that they had found one common ark of refuge they lived on the best of terms with each other. The bulldog never attempted to worry that particular cat, while Puss restricted her civilities to an occasional box on the ear when she thought him to be getting the best of it, at feeding time. Cat and dog alike respected Peter, the tame saucy sparrow, and seemed to entertain not the least wish to make a meal off him.

The three boys skirmished round the table, on the look-out for such unconsidered trifles as morsels of crisp toast, "fingers" of bread-and-butter dipped in egg, and bits of nicely fried bacon, doled out to them at short intervals by the good-humoured young doctor. The pet sparrow sat on his shoulder, while the cat and dog supported him on either side, eagerly watching his movements and waiting for their share of the banquet.

Cheery, humane, unselfish as ever, the expression of quiet sadness and want of individual interest in life, the result of disappointed hope, that frequently rested upon Vincent Eyre's rugged face was the only token of his

patiently borne sorrow that he allowed to escape him. He never visited it upon other people in word or deed, since they had had no part in bringing it about.

He had found a school for Birdie at Brighton, and he was in the habit of going there once a fortnight to see her, and ascertain for himself that she was well and happy.

The child of his dead sister already evinced a strong affection for him, hailing his arrival with delight, and grieving over his departure. Towards her other uncle, Richard, she manifested a very different feeling. His grim, unconciliatory manner frightened and displeased her. When he was present she refused to speak to him; if he attempted to caress or in any way interfere with her she set up a roar that speedily drove him from the room, a sadder and a wiser man. With Vincent she was docile, lovable, and obedient, however; and Richard was only too glad to delegate the task of looking after her welfare to his brother.

Vincent, having disposed of his East-end practice to a young beginner, was on the point of leaving it to his successor and going into partnership with the West-end doctor, whose offer had once filled him with joy, imagining as he did then that this advance in his profession would prove the stepping-stone to his marriage with Gwendoline Massey.

He had long since proved the fallacy of such hopes, and resigned himself to the loss of the woman he loved, the woman who had liked and respected, but who had never loved him.

His castles in the air had tumbled about his ears, a mass of shapeless ruins. It was not in his power to build them up again, or to erect a fresh edifice in which to enshrine another love. In Gwendoline he had found his ideal woman, and so long as he lived she would occupy the first place in his loyal, steadfast heart, although she might never deign to bestow another passing thought upon him.

The partnership, no longer viewed through a golden haze of vague, delightful anticipation, was still a thing to be duly valued and accepted. He owed it to himself to make what progress he could to use his talent to the best advantage. Gwendoline for him had virtually ceased to exist; nevertheless, duty remained, and duty had ever been Vincent Eyre's watchword. It helped him to bear up under his trouble as no mere reckless dissipation or self-abandonment would have been capable of doing.

Neither Vincent nor Richard had obtained any clue to Sandy MacNab's whereabouts. The old Scotchman had continued cleverly to evade them, while living, as it were, within a stone's throw of the brothers. Without flagging in their search for the man who had it in his power to vindicate their father's innocence in the matter of the bank failure, they were beginning to lose heart, and to wonder if the sacred, filial duty to which they had pledged themselves would ever meet with a successful issue.

Vincent had seen no more of Sandy MacNab's daughter. Being unable to come across her father it had not been necessary for him to send her any communication. Had he unearthed Sandy he would at once have informed her to that effect, in fulfilment of the promise given.

The skirmishers round the breakfast-table representing the infantry, were presently disturbed by the arrival of the main body in the person of their mother.

"Be off downstairs with you at once," said that matron, in a tone of stern authority, put on to veil the satisfaction she felt at their being "taken notice of" by the doctor. "I never see such naughty forward boys to come up here without leave," interrupting Doctor Eyre over his breakfast. You're too easy with them, sir, that's what it is, and they take advantage of your kindness. Run away now, all of you, and get ready for school."

The infantry retired, carrying lumps of sugar, pieces of roll, and other small game

with them. Vincent rose, put the tame sparrow back into its cage, and prepared to go out on his morning round.

"The boys are not in my way, Mrs. Larkspur," he replied, pleasantly. "I like to have them; they are jolly little fellows, and we shan't be able to enjoy each other's society much longer, you know."

"Ah, more's the pity," said Mrs. Larkspur, dolefully, "I shall be sorry to lose you, sir. A quieter and more considerate lodger no landlady would wish to have. It will seem strange to see another gentleman here in your place! Oh, yes, to be sure, the new doctor may prove agreeable, and as ready to prescribe for the boys free gratis—which they're always catching and bringing home some fresh complaint, or making of themselves into cases worth studying in the most accommodating manner—but ever since I took this house over you've been my favourite lodger, sir, and I shall miss you dreadfully."

"It is very kind of you to say so, Mrs. Larkspur. I suppose we all like to feel that we shall be missed by somebody when we go away."

"Of course we do; it's only right and natural. Are you going to take all your pets with you, sir, to your new home?"

"Yes, I can't leave them behind," laughed Vincent, striking the bull-dog's ugly, sensible head. "What Doctor Clark's housekeeper will think of my disreputable crew I hardly dare to anticipate; but she must give them house-room. We are not to be separated, eh, Jack?"

"I only hope she'll attend to your comfort, sir," suggested Mrs. Larkspur, with the distrust peculiar to a good housewife, when alluding to an unknown member of the same fraternity. "Badly-cooked meals you've had in this house from the previous landlady, but not from me. People differ, and though I say it as shouldn't, it's not everybody who knows how to make nice, tasty dishes at a trifling cost. Why, I only gave a shilling for the calf's feet you had yesterday, stewed, and served up with parsley and butter; and the liquor they was biled in, with some lemon juice and a drop of wine, will make a nice little jelly for your dinner to-day. And there's lots of other things equally as nice, and as cheap, if people only knew how to set about buying and making them. But, lor, Doctor Clark's housekeeper is sure to be alone such trifles. She'll try to poison you with French cooking, I shouldn't wonder."

"If she does I'll haun't her," rejoined Vincent, taking up his hat and gloves, and making for the door. "I'm certain that I shall miss your good cooking, Mrs. Larkspur, and I'm not at all certain that I shall not drop in sometimes, 'permiscus,' to see if you have anything especially good under way."

"And you'll always be welcome," retorted the landlady heartily, "which is more than I could truthfully say to the general run of my lodgers."

(To be continued.)

AN INDIAN ROCK INSCRIPTION.—Among the monuments assumed to be connected with the aboriginal history of North America is a rock inscription on the rocky islet of Menana, off the coast of Maine. The rock surface is smooth, and the inscription lies within a sort of border. The symbol which constitute the inscription resemble in shape our letters V and X, or combinations of those letters. No one has yet pretended to give any exposition of their significance. Professor Stone has lately made a careful examination of the rock, and declares that the so-called inscription and other similar appearances in the neighbourhood are not the work of human hand. The smooth surface of the rock is simply the effect of weathering upon a fine plane of cleavage, while the apparent symbols are only flaws or fissures filled up with oxide of iron.

HOW SHE LED THE WAY.

The wedding rites were over,
The groom and fair young bride,
As happy as two souls could be,
Walk slowly side by side;
But when they reached the churchyard,
Mid scattered flowers of May,
The young bride opened wide the gate,
And gently led the way.

"She'll rule her lord and master,"
The idle gossips cried;
"She'll rule his hearth, and rule his home,
And rule his heart beside."
And they have proved true prophets,
Who marked the sign that day,
And idly said, "She'll surely rule
Because she led the way."

But not in such a manner
As they had prophesied,
Held this fair wife a ruling hand,
From morn till eventide;
She ruled in her own fair province;
She proved her husband's stay;
In all things good and beautiful
She gently led the way.

She gave her sweetest counsel
To him when care oppressed;
Her little children found her rule
The sweetest and the best;
To scenes of solemn grandeur,
Through gardens bright and gay,
Holding each little hand in hers,
She softly led the way.

And when the shadows deepened
Upon the outer scene,
How happy is the little band
Around the mother-queen!
The angels love to linger,
And brighten day by day,
Such household bands, where true love rules
And upward leads the way.

M. A. K.

HAD WE NEVER LOVED SO BLINDLY.

CHAPTER XIII.

If Flora Trevanian had but known it, she had already taken one step along the road which would lead her ultimately to where the shadows were lurking—the darkest clouds gathering over her pretty young head.

Sir Basil released her hand, and she instantly turned round as if to go back to the carriage.

"Stay a moment," he said, with a smile; "you came to see the view, and you haven't looked at it. First look at those white sails shining out against the grey background of the island, then turn to the right and see Greylands standing out against the firs!"

"Lovely!" and then there was a long pause, as her eyes wandered from the gleaming waters of the Solent and the ships on its broad bosom, to the grave old Abbey where the monks of old had chanted their psalms, and prayed their long prayers till voice and heart were both at rest under the green sod. Some of the solemnity of the past seemed to hang over the building still, in spite of the flowers that made the gardens one blaze of colour, and the creepers that clung so readily to the rough grey stone of the walls, and some of the gloom of the past, or the present, hung over the proud possessor of all these wide acres which stretched over the sunny valley to the borders of the forest, over wood and hill, purple heath and golden corn—a gloom which seemed thoroughly out of place in a young unmarried man whose struggles and difficulties were over before the prime of life had passed.

Flora gazed long at the beautiful landscape,

the sparkling waters, the forest-trees rising like green waves in a leafy ocean one behind the other, the stately home enshrined by the tall straight firs and feathery larches, and then she sighed.

"Why?" he asked her.

"It seems so hard that all this beautiful place cannot make you happy," she answered, looking up into his face with infinite pity shining out from under her thick lashes. How Jenny and Emily and half the world would have laughed at the idea of pitying the rich baronet!

"No, it can't, and you are the only person who guess it. I'm not made for a country-life. I fancy it doesn't come naturally to me to take an interest in cabbages and mangold-wurzel, to talk knowingly about fat pigs, or to settle which pasture is better for sheep. Sometimes I think I shall throw up the whole concern, establish Mitchell in the Abbey, and go abroad; and then people lecture me about my tonants, and tell me it is my duty to look after them, as if Mitchell didn't understand that sort of thing much better than I."

"Don't you think people grow to love their master?" said Flora, softly, "whilst they only fear a steward."

"They may, but if I stayed till my hair grew white they wouldn't care a straw for me. I have no delusions about myself. I'm not the sort of fellow out of which a devoted tenantry could make an ideal landlord. Thornton, with his red face and jolly laugh, understands the sort of dodge, and would take their hearts by storm; but put up a dry stick in my place," pointing to a blighted fir which had lost nearly all its branches, "and they will learn to like it quite as much as me."

"I don't agree with you!" her heart softening as she guessed the bitterness in his; "the man who can risk his own life to save a stranger's, and without a moment's hesitation, is something better than a dry stick."

"The man who didn't would be a miserable cur—the man who did only won dislike for his pains."

"How can you say so?"

"I can say so," drawing himself up with a slight frown, "because it is the truth."

"It is not, I swear it isn't!" her eyes shining, her cheeks flushing. "Eustace thinks there is no one like you. Look how he stays on at the Abbey, when he never wanted to be away from me before!"

"Stays on because I begged him not to desert me. Novelty counts for much in a boy's friendships. I possess that charm at least for the whole neighbourhood," with a bitter smile.

"Eustace is not like that. He has made you his hero, not because you are new, but because he appreciates you."

Sir Basil took off his hat, and made a low bow, whilst the dark mood seemed to fly at her words.

"And you, you say nothing of yourself," his eyes softening.

"I look upon you as the best friend that girl ever had. That isn't saying much," she added, hastily, as she saw the joy in his face, "for I've got so few."

"Thank Heaven you have!" with all his heart. "I wish to Heaven you had only one, that one myself."

"Very greedy of you," trying to speak lightly as she turned away, and began to descend the hill. "I don't see why you shouldn't be satisfied at being the best!"

"I ought," he confessed; "but somehow you make me more grasping than I ever was before."

"I don't like grasping people," still pursuing her way at a rapid pace; "whatever they want they must have, and they don't care a bit what they do to get it."

Sir Basil did not answer, and presently put her into the carriage without a word, leaving her to apologise to Eustace for their long delay, and to dilate on the beauties of the view. His silence lasted so long that he

acted like a wet blanket on the others, and conversation flagged.

Becoming conscious of this, as they drew near to the Firs, he roused himself with a great effort, and spoke to Flora about something in the distance with so sweet a smile that her brother was quite reassured. A few minutes later, as they turned a corner in a leafy lane, where the boughs met overhead, and made a delicious twilight of the splendour of a day in June, they came upon Mr. Philip Fane lounging on the bank in close confabulation with a man who looked like a Londoner of the lower grade.

As he recognised Flora he shot an astonished glance at the lovely face, which made it crimson with displeasure, and looked back at his cousin with a peculiar smile that was almost a sneer. Sir Basil returned the look with a frown, and fastened his eyes on Fane's companion, who in his turn shrank into the hedge as far as he could in order to escape observation.

"What a queer looking fellow!" exclaimed Eustace, staring after the pair with sudden curiosity. "He looks like a sharper, or a black-leg. I wonder where your cousin can have picked him up."

"Philip has all sorts of strange acquaintances," said Sir Basil, thoughtfully, as if the man's face had given him subject for reflection. "You see he is a barrister like myself, and practise at the Old Bailey brings you into contact with many ruffians."

"I should have thought Mr. Fane was too much of a fine gentleman for that sort of thing," said Eustace, who from his enforced idleness exercised his powers of observation to an unusual extent on his fellow-creatures.

"Nobody knows what Philip is. He never is what he seems to be. He is always acting a part."

"You don't like him?"

"I'm not enthusiastic about him," with a smile; "it is such a bore to be obliged to read a fellow backwards; to take it for granted if he says that he's glad that he must be sorry, and vice versa. If he says that he is going fishing I scarcely expect him to take his rod; and whatever he does I speculate about his motive."

"What a detestable man! I beg your pardon," and Flora blushed. "I forgot he was your cousin."

"He is not detestable; but it is my fault if you think him so. I had no right to expose his faults for the public benefit, but in this case, like Philip himself, I had a motive," and Sir Basil's eyes rested meditatively on the fair, young face just opposite to him.

"Very kind of you. You didn't want us to be taken in, and perhaps you knew as I did," with a knowing nod, "that Flo is easily gammoned."

"Nothing of the sort!" she cried, indignantly. "Nobody has ever taken me in, and nobody ever will."

"Don't be too sure," said Sir Basil, gravely. "Pride, we are told, goes before a fall."

She thought of his words in the after days, when pride was lowered, and faith was gone, but they did not make much impression on her now, as they drove in at the gate of the Firs, and her guardian came out on the steps to greet her.

"I was just going to send the police after you," he said, with his cheery laugh; "but you are home in time to save us both a scolding. How well Eustace is looking! He does credit to your care, Sir Basil; but when are we to expect him back?"

"Not so long as I can induce him to stay with me. What harm does it do to anyone his being there; and it does an infinity of good to me?"

"I miss him rather," said Flora, gently, as she slipped her hand inside her guardian's arm.

"You know where to find him, Miss Trevanion; and surely, now that my aunt is staying with me, you need not avoid us as if we had the plague!"

"No, if Eustace wants me I'll come. Good-bye, and thank you very much."

The words were to Sir Basil, but the last look was given to her brother.

CHAPTER XIV.

To say that Mrs. Willoughby was cross, to say that her two daughters were rabidly jealous, to say that life was made particularly uncomfortable for Flora Trevanion for the next few days would be no exaggeration, and yet the three ladies were obliged, to a certain extent, to hold their tongues.

Mrs. Willoughby took upon himself the whole responsibility of the drive, so they were obliged to put up in comparative silence with the mortification of knowing that Flora was the only item of the party at the Firs necessary to Sir Basil's happiness when an invitation came to the Abbey, whilst nobody could have exactly complained of a gentleman coming in at a gate who seemed to have gone away quicker than he came.

Ponto knew of the tranquil quarter-of-an-hour Mr. Frank Rivers had spent on the green sward at Miss Trevanion's feet, but he was too well-bred a dog to betray a girl's confidence, and Jenny—the irate Jenny—had nothing but conjecture to go upon. But conjecture in her case was quite enough, if not far too much, and she raged inwardly at the thought that whilst she was playing with a stranger whom she did not care for, and who, worse still, was perfectly indifferent to herself, Flora, the interloper, was amusing herself with the friend of another girl's childhood.

Finding both the girls intent upon being disagreeable, and having no Eustace to fall back upon, poor Flora was very disconsolate. She was debarred from going to her favourite haunts in Greylands, so long as the baronet was in possession; and not knowing what to do with herself, she was quite glad to offer to carry a book to the Rectory, which Mrs. Willoughby had promised to lend the Winders.

In a silver-grey cotton, with a bunch of pink roses at her throat, and her large white hat donned in honour of the Rector's wife, she looked a pretty picture of an English girl in the pride of her youth and innocence. She put her foot on the ground, and carried her head with a high-bred air, that excited the admiration of one pair of insolent eyes, which chanced to fall on her; and Mr. Philip Fane, lounging at his ease with a cigarette between his lips, quickened his steps so as to meet her face to face.

A lovely blush, born of annoyance as well as shyness, spread over cheek and brow, as he caught his hat off his head, and took the cigarette out of his mouth, and exclaimed, "Miss Trevanion!" in astonishment at the surprising fact that she should be found in a road a few hundred yards from her home.

She bent her head, and would have passed on without a word, only he had stopped straight in front of her.

"Allow me to carry that book for you?"

"Thank you, but we are not going the same way," looking beyond him, but not at him.

"But we shall be if I turn round," stretching out his hand for it.

"I have promised to take it to the Rectory."

"So you shall, but you need not make a beast of burden of yourself on the road," taking hold of it.

In order to avoid a struggle she let go of it, but as soon as it was in his hand and out of hers she turned round.

"Now," she said, with a defiant bow, "I leave you to take it as you insist. Good afternoon."

She went a few paces before he recovered from his amazement, then he hurried after her.

"No, Miss Trevanion, I offered to carry it for you, not for the old lady at the Rectory."

"It has nothing to do with me," proudly. "Mrs. Willoughby sends it by your hands instead of mine to Mrs. Winder."

"But I decline; Mrs. Winder I don't know from Adam—or Eve, perhaps, I had better say, and I don't care a straw about providing food for her mind!"

"Then give it back to me."

"No, I will carry the book to the gate, but no further."

"Then you won't carry it at all!" her eyes flashing defiance under the lace edge of her large parasol.

"Excuse me, I have set my heart on it, and I have never been beaten by a woman," looking down into her face with an imperturbable smile, which rarely boded good to man or woman.

"But you may be by a girl," and she walked on with her small round chin in the air, and her resolute face turned homewards.

Philip Fane bit his lip, and inwardly cursed her obstinacy. He felt that she had made a fool of him, but he was determined that there should be no excuse for a quarrel between them. He therefore hid his mortification as best he could, and taking off his hat, bowed low as he placed the book in her hand.

"Take it back," he said, magnanimously, "and as you object to my company I will take myself off. I suppose my cousin has told you that I am a pauper, and warned you to turn the cold shoulder."

"Nothing of the sort," she said, indignantly. "I am a pauper myself, and I don't judge my friends by their pockets."

"So long as you count me for a friend I don't care," he said, with a smile.

"I said nothing about it."

"Indeed you did, and I am not likely to forget it. Small mercies thankfully received," and, with a mocking look and a second bow, he walked off, leaving her to wonder if she had been too rude, or too proper.

Mrs. Winder was a good-natured, kind-hearted woman, with a plain face and an old-fashioned cap. Ill-natured critics said of her that she was the most unselfish woman under the sun, because she was always so much more interested in other people's business than her own; but her husband, a gentlemanly-looking man with a pale, refined face, boasted that his wife had such a large heart that she could take in the whole neighbourhood, and still leave plenty of room for her own family.

Flora was a great favourite of hers, though neither her son nor her daughter could get on with her, and she kissed her heartily on each cheek with a compliment attached to both kisses.

"Now come and sit down by me, my dear," leading her to a sofa, where comfort had been thought of instead of elegance, "and tell me all the news. It is such a comfort to have an unmarried man in the neighbourhood, because he is always the centre of interest. Now, how is it?" with a roguish twinkle in her eye, "that Sir Basil has managed to keep your brother up at the Abbey? I thought you two were like the Siamese twins?"

"And so we were," her pretty lips pouting because the Rector's wife alluded to her pet grievance; "but Eustace is so happy up at the Abbey that we can't get him away."

"I suspect he is very useful as a magnet," pinching the girl's round arm. "Now, tell me, do you go up and see him every day of the week?"

"No, I can't do that," looking down at the carpet.

"Oh, you can't, can't you? The next thing I shall hear will be that you are staying at the Abbey with Mrs. Philip Fane."

"No, that you won't; Eustace must come home. He must like me better than a man whom he has only known for a few weeks," looking up into Mrs. Winder's kind face appealingly.

"There can be no doubt of that," she said, promptly; "but, my dear, it is a pleasant change for him, and I don't think you ought to grudge it him. As to yourself, it's quite another thing. Old friends are best; don't desert them for a stranger."

"I shouldn't think of such a thing," blushed

ing to the roots of her hair. "But Sir Basil saved Eustace's life, and mine, too," she added, as if the last were not of the same consequence.

"Yes, my dear, and according to the old adage he ought to avoid you both like poison, for you are bound to do him an injury. You won't be offended if I give you a little word of advice."

"No, that I won't. I never mind what you say to me," pressing her hand affectionately.

"Don't have too much to do with him," sinking her voice to a mysterious whisper. "There is something about him that I don't trust, and something inside him that I can't make out. Now, what was the meaning of that placard? So very odd, you know—there must be some motive in the background. After five years' silence to break out like that!"

"Yes; but I think he had nothing to do with it," said Flora, eagerly, ready enough to champion him now that he was attacked, though she generally held her tongue when he was lauded to the skies; "but if he had it was only very right of him to wish to avenge his cousin's death. Really, if you knew him better you would find out how kind and considerate he is for everybody. He has the noblest heart in the world, and it is a shame that no one seems to give him credit for it."

Mrs. Winder tapped the carpet with her foot.

"Very pretty, my dear! I'm only thankful that he can't hear you. For Heaven's sake, take care! You are far too good to be trusted to the first stranger that turns up."

"If you talk like that I'll go. Why can't he be my friend, and nothing else?" standing up.

"Because men are made of flesh and blood. Don't go. Stay to tea, and Edgar shall walk back with you."

Flora shook her head with a smile.

"He must; there's an odd-looking man about."

"He won't hurt me. Good-bye."

"No, wait a minute. I believe Sir Basil's round the corner," laughingly.

"Then I mustn't keep him waiting," and with a roguish glance over her shoulder she ran away, determined not to incur Emily's displeasure by accepting the escort of "her own especial young man."

CHAPTER XV.

"WELL, I never!" exclaimed Martha Jameson, looking down at the glittering coin in her hand, just dropped into it by Sir Basil Fane, before he rode away; "that be the kindest gentleman that ever stepped. When you tell him of a peck of trouble he don't cut you short in the midst, but he listens to you as if he was a woman, and gives you a word of comfort or advice, with something else to back it up!"

"He's got a open hand, but that's the only blessed thing that's open about him!" rejoined a neighbour, with a laugh, as she looked after him over the edge of her small gate.

"He knows how to keep his mouth shut when there's curious folk about, and how to cut a body short when he don't want to answer a question."

"More shame to them as has the impudence to worrit him. Sakes alive! If a gentleman—a right down gentleman—mayn't keep his affairs to his self without being picked to pieces, I wonder what the world's coming to!" and, hugging her baby to her breast, she went indoors, and flung the door to behind her, as a demonstration.

Sir Basil was doing his best to work up to a young girl's ideal of a model landlord, but he found it worse than any drudgery at the bar.

Finding that he would listen to them, every woman in the parish thought she had a right to pour into his ear every grievance that she had ever suffered from, no matter if it were of many years' standing; and the steward was

in despair at the constant orders he had to see that such-and-such a job was done for people, who had really enough money to do it for themselves.

He shook his head, and swore that the baronet would be ruined before ten years were over his head; but Sir Basil gave him to understand that he cared for his tenants' happiness and well-being, and not one rap for amassing a fortune.

"Think of those that will come after," urged Mitchell, with respectful entreaty.

"No, I'll leave that for Mr. Philip," said Sir Basil, sternly.

"Lor! sir! I hope he'll never be master here! The days of comfort will be over."

"Make the best of them, so long as they last—that's my advice to you," as he tied up a roll of paper with a string.

"But, begging your pardon, sir," twisting his hat round, and getting very red in the face, "ain't there enough pretty young ladies in the place for you to take your choice?"

"Enough and to spare. But I don't happen to be a marrying man." So saying, Sir Basil gave his steward a nod of dismissal, locked up his desk, and went out for a ride.

Not a marrying man! If the gossips in the place had only heard him; if Mrs. Willoughby and both her girls had only had an inkling of it, there might have been more peace for the feminine hearts of the neighbourhood.

No, he would never marry, though he knew one pair of dark eyes which tempted him almost beyond the power of resistance.

He would do all in his power to make the girl his friend, insensibly to mould her will to his, and draw her into the habit of a sweet dependence.

First, by the exercise of strong self-restraint, he must win her confidence, and overcome her shyness, then he must gradually slip into the part of adviser and confidant. After that, with Eustace in his hands as a powerful factor, what could prevent his life being sunned and beautified by the sweetest platonic friendship that the heart of the ancient heathen could devise?

His own conscience might have answered, "Human weakness," as he rode on over the plastic turf, under the shade of ancient beeches, which were only less old than the proud and stainless name that he bore, through the young bracken in its tender green, where the deer were trying to find a shelter for their noble antlered heads.

It appeared a beautiful world to him that day, and everything that the heart of man delighted in seemed to be within his reach.

He saw himself looked up to by his tenants, honoured and respected by his neighbours, a power of some consideration in the land of his ancestors, strong to help, strong to resist, strong enough if need be to stand alone, or to win others to stand by him.

He had riches, he had position, he had everything that he could wish for except a girl's friendship. It had been promised him, but Heaven alone knew if the lips—the sweet, the lovable lips—that made the promise would also keep it.

Others would try to win her away from him—Young Rivers, and a tribe of unknown eligibles in the future. Would she stand firm, always with one hand clasped in his, always with one corner of her priceless heart reserved for him alone?

On the answer to that question he felt that the happiness of his life depended, and he knew by the knowledge that comes to all when the golden days of thoughtless youth are past, that a man who risks his all in one frail craft is likely to lose his all in one night's storm.

There was a smile on his lips as he rode through the park and out by a side gate which led into a lane. Here in the outside world he felt that at any moment he might catch sight of the girl whom he had madly raised into an idol, and that gave a new brightness to the sun, a new beauty to the tangled hedgerows. It also gave him patience to listen to Martha



["TAKE IT BACK," HE SAID; "AND, AS YOU OBJECT TO MY COMPANY, I WILL TAKE MYSELF OFF!"]

Jameson's tale of woe without one sign of restless inattention, and when he went on a little further he was rewarded by the sight of a silver grey skirt, soft in colour as a dove's wing, and a white-plumed hat that shaded the sweetest face in Hampshire.

"I was just thinking of you," he said, in all sincerity, as he dismounted, and held her hand for one long minute in his. "I've disgusted Mitchell beyond all recovery by telling him that I'm not a marrying man. Do you think it dreadful of me to proclaim such a creed in a land of pretty girls like this?"

"Very wise," she said, with a smile, as her long lashes drooped over her blushing cheeks. "It may save a few people from indulging in vain hopes."

"I hope it will do something more for me than that," he said, gravely. "Won't it take all shyness from our future intercourse if you learn betimes to look upon me as an elder brother—nothing more, and nothing less?"

"Oh, yes," and a light came into her eyes such as he had never seen before. "I would thank Heaven from the bottom of my heart for giving me such a brother as you!"

A wave of emotion passed over his face, but by a violent effort he contrived to keep his voice steady.

"Then you won't be always fighting against me in the future? You will give in sometimes when I ask you?"

"That I will!" she said, heartily. "It was all nonsense that made me so obstinate; it will be quite different now."

"There will be nothing between us now?" he said, in a low voice.

"Nothing," she answered, promptly.

"Nothing at all?" he repeated. "No foolish prejudices, no idle conventionalities? You will come to me just as if my name were Trevanian—Basil Trevanian, your elder brother?"

"Yes," she assented, softly.

"And in course of time you will learn to love me like another Eustace?" looking down

into her face as if he would read her very soul.

"In course of time, perhaps," playing with the tassel of her parasol, and feeling as if an iron hand prevented her from raising her eyes.

"And you will call me Basil?" coming very close to her, till the edge of her parasol knocked against his shoulder.

"Perhaps," she said, shyly, wishing herself back at the Firs, because her heart was beating so unmanageably.

"And you will come to my house just as if it were your own?"

"But I couldn't," opening wide her eyes.

"But you can, so long as my aunt is with me!" smiling at her astonishment.

"Ah, yes! but she won't stay."

"Perhaps I shall keep her, and Eustace too," laughing a little.

"No, Eustace must come back. Promise me that," lifting her eyes to his in urgent entreaty.

"I'd promise you anything," he said, gruffly; "even to cut my throat if you wished it."

"Don't do that. Now I must go, or my aunt will wonder what has become of me."

"I will walk down to the gate with you if you will allow me the honour. Soon, in the character of your brother, I shan't ask permission, but take it for granted."

"I wish I could make you a Trevanian really," she said, with a smile, as they walked along the road side by side; the horse keeping pace with them, as Sir Basil had slung the bridle over his arm.

"Think of me as a Trevanian, and call me Basil for once," bending low to look into her face.

"Send me back my brother and I'll call you anything you like," the pink colour rising in her cheeks.

"He shall come, upon my word of honour he shall," earnestly; "but not yet, Flo. You can spare him a little longer."

They parted at the gate, he holding her

hand in a long, tender clasp, and she letting it rest in his grasp, because he wished for her friendship, and nothing more! Friendship is the snare in which many pretty feet are caught, but Flora Trevanian was in the happy stage when credulity is the synonym of youth.

Sir Basil Fane rode home that day hapier than he had been for many years past. As he neared the private gate his horse shied at something that startled him, and it was only thanks to his rider's good seat that he was not thrown in the dust.

The "something" was a yellow placard which flaunted right across the paling, with the words,

"MURDER!"

"ONE THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD!"

at the top. It was not there when Sir Basil passed through earlier in the day, but the hand of some enemy had placed it there now to cast the shadow of death across his rising hopes.

(To be continued.)

TRUCK SYSTEM IN THE ARMY.—We understand that the authorities have instituted an investigation into matters connected with the "truck system" and exclusive dealing with canteens in the army. This reprehensible token system is not, we are sorry to say, confined to any one station or corps. At our largest military station the system has been for some time in full swing in three battalions of infantry at least. Those who have been appointed to investigate this matter have only to call for the company books of any of these regiments, inspect the men's accounts, and ask the victims of this system a few independent questions, to speedily arrive at the truth. It is a fact that several officers commanding companies would have nothing to do with this system from its inception, foreseeing the abuses it would inevitably lead to.



["I SHALL REMEMBER YOU ALL MY LIFE," HE SAYS, EARNESTLY.]

NOVELLETTE.

NOT THEIRS THE SIN.

CHAPTER I.

"Miss Gipsy!"

The girl turns slowly from her inspection of the dusty white road, and looks down at the honest face and frank grey eyes of the speaker.

"How did you get up there?"

"By the steps. Thomas has taken them away, so I am a prisoner until he chooses to return."

The young fellow glances towards the "odd-job man," training nectarines at a little distance.

"I can lift you down," he says smiling, but the girl shakes her head.

"I like being here market-days; I see all my old friends and acquaintances, and get a pleasant greeting from each," she answers, veering round so rapidly, that but for the young man's quick, strong hands she must have fallen from her seat on the wall. It is exactly six feet high, and his brow is level with its top; now he says,

"May I join you?"

"You may come if you care to!" dimples showing in her pretty cheeks, "but climbing is bad for clothes." He does not seem to mind this, and in two seconds is sitting facing her, his grey eyes a little mischievous, and the suspicion of a smile showing under his moustache.

"Why do you come on market-days?"

"I don't always, only when the weather is good. Of course I come to see the people; this place is so fearfully dull that one is glad of any break in the monotony, however small."

"I suppose," he says, "your admirers all pass along this road to the town?"

"Of course they do. There is Dick Harney, who is as stupid as he is handsome; then there is Mr. Tuck, with a face besides which a

strawberry is pale, and a moustache like a stubble-field; and Harry March, who is neither handsome nor plain, tall nor short, good nor bad." She laughs as she draws her catalogue to a close, and her companion asks with mock surprise,—

"Is that the full complement of lovers and admirers?"

"I can't truthfully say it is; but if I speak of others you will dub me a conceited young woman."

"Indeed no; and I am interested in these unhappy mortals, for of course you treat them with disdain."

Gipsy lifts her large, dark brown eyes to his; the pretty crimson shows through her brown skin, on either rounded cheek; and the scarlet lips, parting in a smile, reveal two rows of glistening teeth.

"How else do you suppose a Rossiter would behave to such admirers?"

"I can imagine no other way"—the girl's eyes leave his face and travel to the road where a horseman is going at a slow pace and regarding her adoringly.

"That is Mr. Tuck," she says, in a whisper, and bows to the strawberry-faced man in a half coquettish way.

"I'm afraid you're a very sad flirt," her companion says amusedly, and she answers dreamily,—

"I am what circumstances have made me. Society here is so limited that a man is a godsend, especially if he is young, good-looking, and polished."

"Thank you!" mischievously accepting the compliment as paid to himself.

Gipsy's eyes open wide.

"For impertinence and vanity command me to Mr. Hugh Stamer."

"That is cruel, and I could not have believed you guilty of malice but for this proof. Do you know, young lady, it is time to start for the Hall?"

"Yes, but I'm not going; I hate tennis. I can't see the use of rushing about in such a

sun as this, merely to knock balls to and fro. If it had been croquet I should have been pleased to join the party. There are such facilities for flirting and enjoying oneself generally whilst playing the latter."

"But," ignoring the last half of her speech, "the boys are going!"

"That makes no difference to my decision. I am far too sane to put off my cool holland for a much-befouled cashmere, and I am indolent to-day. Of course you will go?"

"No; I have been longing for a reasonable excuse to absent myself. I shall stay here to amuse you."

She makes a mocking little bow.

"How exceedingly kind you are!" Then her name is called loudly in three distinct voices, and she sees her brothers, each with his bat, looking dismayed at her appearance.

"Why, Gipsy, you aren't dressed!" Frank says vexedly.

"I'm not going; now don't exclaim and protest, but carry my excuses to Mrs. Hanlan; say I am ill, dying, anything you like, so that my conduct doesn't appear *very* flagrant."

The governor will be vexed when he hears you have called off," remarks Ted, but Gipsy makes a disdainful grimace. "The governor"—mockingly—"thinks I can do no wrong," and when her brothers at last pass out of the garden, she turns to Hugh with a sigh of relief.

"How comfortable I feel, now I have done my duty," laughing softly.

"I cannot say that I am comfortable; it's very hot up here, and I'm positively baking."

"Shall we get down? It is rather sunny here. You can lower yourself, then fetch the steps for me," coolly.

And Hugh slips down, then says,—

"Thomas is at the remote end of the garden. I shall lift you from the wall."

And not being oppressed by any mock, nineteenth-century modesty, Gipsy allows this, and in another moment is standing beside him on the gravel path.

"How the sun pours down upon one's head. Don't evince any surprise if I have a stroke!"

"Prevention is better than cure. Put a cabbage-leaf in the crown of your hat. Is that more comfortable?" she asks, as he obeys her.

"Infinitely. I should not have thought of such a thing myself! Two heads are better than one."

"Sometimes," Gipsy remarks, with a sage nod; "but I could name many exceptions."

"I shall be delighted to hear them. Pray begin."

"It is too hot. I will tell you some other time."

"That's a mean way of getting out of a difficulty. I don't believe you can prove your assertion."

Gipsy laughs.

"I am not to be scoffed into giving my reasons. Now tell me please, Mr. Stamer, have you remained at home from indolent or philanthropic motives? To please yourself, or to amuse me?"

"I won't tell a lie," comically. "I prefer staying with you, and I don't very much care for tennis."

"Why not substitute 'because' for 'and', it would take from the courtesy and add to the truth of your speech," the girl says, with an arch glance.

"That is very nasty, and I don't know what punishment you deserve," with a look of admiration at the pretty, piquant face. "If I revelled in tennis I should still prefer staying here with you; but the game really interests me very little."

"I'm glad it is so," Gipsy says, emphatically. "I fancy a man must be a milksop to spend all his leisure moments in the practice of it. If I belonged to the male sex I should run, jump, skate, row, cricket—do anything, in fact, that calls for strength and skill."

"You say nothing of football. Don't you approve that?"

"Oh, yes, especially when played according to Rugby rules; it is so delightfully dangerous. But, of course, a few broken legs and collar-bones add to the fun of the thing."

"You little barbarian," Hugh says, with mock disgust, and Gipsy interrupts, quickly,—

"Pardon, it is the game that is barbarous, not I. Seriously speaking, I object to it, although," beginning to laugh—"it has one merit, it occasionally rids the world of an obnoxious, 'muscular Christian.'"

They have reached the confines of the garden, and Hugh asks,—

"What do you intend doing now?"

"Nothing," coolly; "but you may row me up and down the stream under the trees."

"That is a very nice arrangement for you," laughing outright; "but I don't see my way to a refusal. Will you stay here while I go to the house for books and a cushion?" and he hurries off to return in a few moments, flushed with the haste he has made.

"I think," says Gipsy, as she swings open the gate, and enters the meadow, which is bordered by a broad and shallow stream, "I think we had best go no further than Mab's Hollow. I should not wish anyone to see us, and carry Mrs. Hanlan the real reason for our absence."

On the stream is a roomy boat, and close by it a small canoe belonging to Gipsy.

Hugh helps her into the former, gives her a book, then taking the sculls makes for the middle of the stream.

Mab's Hollow is the extreme boundary of Mr. Rossiter's ground, and, reaching it, Hugh announces his intention of tying up the boat.

"We can spend a jolly hour or two under the trees. The only thing we need to insure our perfect content is an unlimited supply of iced lemonade."

"I think you are extremely indolent," the girl remarks, as she resettles her cushion. "I expected you would keep the boat going until I cried stop."

"Oh! Miss Rossiter, you're worse than a lave-driver," reproachfully. "The late trifling

exertion has rendered me incapable of action of any kind for at least two hours. I am positively melting away. Do you treat your brothers in this unchristian fashion?"

"If it is unchristian—yes. Brothers are born to serve their sisters, but few of them understand their duties."

She opens her book and begins to read, and Hugh, lying in the bow, looks into the pretty face under its sunburnt hat, and wonders a little what his father would say could he know the hopes he nurses concerning the girl.

Presently she yawns and closes the volume.

"Is your book interesting, Mr. Stamer? because mine is the reverse. The heroine is a sentimental, die-away sort of girl, with yellow hair and blue eyes. Of course she is named Lily—they always are," disgustedly. She leans forward and peers over his book. "Oh! you have not been reading, it is in the wrong ship up; have you been dosing?"

"No," unhesitatingly. "I've been looking at you and thinking how very pretty you are."

Gipsy blushes furiously.

"You are remarkably candid," with a little nervous laugh.

"I was thinking, too," Hugh says, "it would be a dead nice if you talked to me instead of reading. I am an excellent listener. Tell me about yourself, Miss Gipsy."

She leans back, clasping her hands behind her head.

"I've nothing to tell that you are not already acquainted with, and I abjure vain repetition on principle."

"But what have you done with the eighteen years of your life, young lady?"

"Nothing—simply nothing. When pleasures came I took them, when they did not it was useless to complain. After all, my life has been a bright one," more thoughtfully than usual. "My father idolises me, my brothers all agreed in spoiling me. In the summer I walk and drive, or paddle up and down the stream in my canoe (that was a present from Alf). In the winter there is skating, provided we get frost, which doesn't happen more than once in five years. For the rest I play a little, sing a little, neither paint nor draw, and know nothing of 'fancy work' and its intricacies. I'm a fearfully ignorant young woman."

"Have you never been to school?"

"No," opening her eyes wide. "How do you suppose father would exist without me? He has taught me all I know, and thanks to him I am a good French scholar. Oh! we have never been parted, and I hope we never shall be."

"Some man will carry you off one day, and you'll go willingly."

Gipsy shakes her head, but not quite so emphatically as she would done three weeks ago.

"You don't know what we are to each other," she says, very gently, and stretches out one pretty brown hand for a forget-me-not, which, when she has gathered, Hugh begs from her.

They are silent for a time, and Gipsy closes her eyes and listens in a dreamy way to the cooing of the wood-pigeons and the occasional call of a crow. In the sunlight the butterflies are glancing from flower to flower, and the great water-fleas dart to and fro. Once a frog appears upon the surface of the water and utters a feeble croak, then disappears and returns to his own cool home.

Hugh glances away from the water into his companion's face. It has grown gentler and graver, and when she speaks her voice is dreamy.

"Once we were very rich. I don't remember being so, but the boys do. But father had a friend who deceived him and robbed him. I don't quite know how that was either, and I dare not ask because it is so painful to him to speak of it. But our lands stretched away miles and miles." She opens her brown eyes then, and with a wave of her hand indicates the pleasant country around them. "All that you see belongs to Squire Hanlan (save this little

nook of ours), but it is as nothing to the land my father once held. I ought to be an heiress, but possibly if I were I should not be so happy."

"That is a very philosophical way of regarding trouble; I hope it will never leave you. But did Mr. Rossiter save nothing but this little spot from the wreck of his fortunes?"

"When he had disposed of houses and lands and paid all that he owed he had just sufficient to purchase this place. His income is derived from my mother's fortune, and amounts in all to four hundred pounds per annum. He grieves terribly, because he says it is so little to divide between four of us. Then, too, he could not give the boys a good start in life. There is Frank a merchant's clerk, Alf an accountant, and poor Ted a midshipman, and father cannot forget the ancient glory of the Rossiters. Neither can we. Why, we are older than most of the so-called 'nobility,' with a pretty flush of pride. 'Only here people do not know us for what we were, and"—laughing—"they call me 'Old Rossiter's madcap daughter.'"

"Poor little Gipsy!" and she hardly notices his familiarity.

The flickering golden light plays through the trees upon her bonny face and curly hair, the butterflies chase each other madly, and, listen, how the pigeons coo! What a heavenly day it is! How it steepes one's senses in a delicious languor that one wishes might last for ever!

The girl's low, musical voice, lazy and languid too, seems hardly to break the golden silence.

"Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,

And in a little while our lips are dumb.

Let us alone. What is it that will last?

All things are taken from us and become Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.

Let us alone. What pleasure can we have

To war with evil? Is there any peace

For even climbing up the climbing wave?

All things have rest and ripen towards the grave

In silence; ripen, fall, and cease.

Give us long rest or death, dark death or dream-

fal ease."

"Those are very beautiful words; Miss Gipsy, but they clothe a horrible idea. Who would spend one's whole life in such shameful indolence and selfish indulgence? All one's feelings would be blunted—all one's perceptions dulled. No; give me work or death."

Gipsy laughs at his earnestness.

"Mr. Stamer, don't spoil this afternoon by speaking of work or death. I am just now in the very mood for 'dreamful ease.'"

"Then now at least you shall have it. Will you be silent whilst I talk to amuse you, or shall I hold my peace?"

"Certainly not the latter. As I have given you a brief sketch of my life, it would be but a just reward if you tell me what you have done in all your twenty-five years."

"Not very much, I'm afraid. You see, being born a rich man there was never any necessity for exertion on my part, and my father would never allow me to adopt any profession. So I have dabbled a little in the muse, and given much of my time to small compositions in the way of comedies and dramas. I confess frankly none of them have yet appeared on the boards, but I do not despair. The more I see of life, the less crude my productions will be, and I am too true an Englishman to give in."

"I thought you were an American, although you haven't the national twang. Frank told me you came from New York."

"So I did, recently; but I was born in England, and educated here. Returning home, I spent two years with my father, and then longing for a sight of my native land broke away from everything to gratify my wish. I brought letters of introduction to Frank's governors, and there I had the good fortune to meet him. Our acquaintance ripened into friendship, and he asked me down here."

"I have never heard you speak of your father before," Gipsy says, thoughtfully. "Will you tell me if he is like you?"

The young man's brow darkens a moment, but in an instant he laughs.

"No, not in the least. He is an extremely lean and lank individual; sallow, with keen, pale blue eyes, a prominent nose, and thin lips."

"I should not like him; his description doesn't sound nice. Why did he voluntarily leave England?"

"Because my mother died here, and after that he hated the country and swore never to visit it again—he loved her."

Something in his tone causes the girl to look up swiftly, and say,—

"And he does not you?"

"No, nor any living creature; nor anything but his money-bags."

The girl looks scornful, but merely asks,—

"And is there no one else to care for you?"

"There is my cousin, Annabel Frost, who is half American; her mother was my father's sister. She is an orphan now, and my father's ward."

"Is she beautiful?"

"I don't know; she was only sixteen when I came away, and, like most school girls shy and awkward—all legs and arms. By-the-way, Miss Gipsy, when is Mr. Rossiter expected home?"

"In three days at the latest; he will be glad to welcome you, and I am sure you will be such good friends that I shall see very little of you."

"That is scarcely likely, Gipsy. I shall not desert my colours."

The long, sunny hours fleet by, and under the trees the shadows deepen. Through the branches a green light falls upon the still, clear waters, and the sun goes slowly sloping to the west, where a couch of crimson and purple clouds awaits him.

The young people have been silent a long time; Gipsy stirs now among her cushions.

"It is time we went home; the boys will be returning soon."

Hugh looks round ruefully.

"I believe the lotos-eater mood has fallen upon me; I am very unwilling to go. What a shadowy arcadia it is!" but he bends to the sculls and they shoot swiftly out into the centre of the stream.

"I shall never forget these pleasant hours," the young man says, glancing into the young girl's lovely dark eyes.

"Nor I," she answers, then blushes hotly; and he takes advantage of her confusion.

"When I am gone you will fall back upon your other cavaliers. Shall you be sorry to say good-bye? and will Messieurs Tuck and March supply my loss?"

"I shall be sorry to say good-bye," demurely; "but, fortunately, I have many friends and acquaintances, so you will not leave me desolate."

"And amongst all those friends and acquaintances Hugh Stamer will be utterly forgotten in the course of a few months."

"Nothing is more probable," flashing a glance at him from under her hat. But we will cry quits as to that, for I question if my name will survive in your memory six months."

"I shall remember you always," he says, emphatically.

And once more Gipsy flushes under his intent look. He gives her his hand, and assists her to the bank, and they walk on side by side in a sudden, embarrassed silence. The girl is first to break it.

"Mr. Stamer, how long shall you remain with us?"

"Are you so very anxious to get rid of me, Miss Gipsy?"

"Ah!" laughing, "you have contracted the abominable Yankee habit of giving question for question. Really, I ought, not to gratify such curiosity, only I am anxious to vindicate the hospitality of the Rossiters.

You seemed to insinuate that we are weary of you."

"Then you are not?" his bright, grey eyes very eager.

"The boys are certainly glad to have you here," she says, evasively.

"And you?" he questions, persistently.

"Oh! I take things as they come, and if unpleasant, endure them with Spartan fortitude and Job-like patience."

"You class me with the unpleasant things," amusedly, and he bends down the better to see her face.

"I did not say so; but, Mr. Stamer, you have not yet answered my question as to the duration of your stay."

"How long will you keep me—three weeks?"

"If you can endure the dulness of Stonyfield so long—yes."

"Dull! why I never had so good a time in my life as I am having here, nor such pleasant companions."

"In the names of Stonyfield and the Rossiters I thank you."

"What a tease you are, Gipsy. I was really speaking sober truth, and you accept it as an empty compliment, and inwardly revel in my confusion."

"Not I; I am too charitable to revel in the confusion of any creature," smiling saucily.

"I am overflowing with the 'milk of human kindness.' There never was a girl more devoid of malice than I."

She swings open the gate dividing the kitchen-garden from the meadow, and passes in before him. He follows slowly up the well-kept paths, his eyes resting in admiration on the dainty figure in its cool, holland dress with the fluttering crimson ribbons, and once, when Gipsy turns to speak, there is such a look upon his face that she can but guess his secret.

The colour flushes her cheeks and brow, but she contrives to say, with perfect sang froid,—

"Mr. Stamer, I'm wondering what your father and cousin would say could they know how poor are the friends you have chosen."

"Rest assured nothing they could say would alter my regard for you and yours; and birth is better than fortune. Why, Annabel's father started life as a huckster, and of my own pedigree I know nothing. If ever I had a grandfather I have heard nothing of the old gentleman. My revered parent is very reserved as to his or my mother's antecedents, so probably I am no better born than Annabel."

"But surely," Gipsy says, a trifle disappointedly, "her mother could have told you all you wished to know?"

"She died before we went to America, and if my uncle was aware of our past I was too young to question him or care about it, and when I grew curious I had no longer the chance to do so, for he died suddenly."

"Oh!"

She moves forward again, and together they enter the sweet, old-fashioned garden, where great cabbage-roses, stocks, white pinks and mignonette, with a score of other sweet-scented flowers fill the very air with odours so rich, so heavy one almost feels them.

"I should be sorry to leave the dear old place," Gipsy says, meditatively; "to my mind there never was so sweet a garden as this ours."

"I quite agree with you," heartily; "and it is in such perfect keeping with the house."

"Yea," looking with loving, lingering eyes on the low, grey stone building surrounded by a verandah, over which wisteria, passion-flowers, clematis, and jasmine climb in wild luxuriance. "It is a lovely picture. Now, to be prosaic, come into dinner. I can hear the boys' voices; doubtless they are ravenous, and consequently impatient."

CHAPTER II.

An intensely hot day in early August; two young people in the meadow just above Mab's

Hollow; a swing is suspended between two trees, and upon the swing sits Gipsy gently swaying to and fro; at her feet lies Hugh Stamer, a vexed look upon his handsome face.

Gipsy regards him reflectively, but he seems quite unconscious of her scrutiny, only looks up into the clear blue vault above, seen dimly through the interlacing branches, and plucks the grass growing around with hasty, impatient fingers.

"Why so wan and pale?" queries the girl, with a low laugh, which echoes amongst the trees like music.

Hugh starts.

"I have had unpleasant news, Miss Gipsy." She looks concerned.

"May I share them?"

"There is no help for it," ruefully. "You know I received a letter from home this morning? It was from my father, and its purport to recall me to America."

Is it the flickering shadow of the leaves that seems to pale her face, or has the blood really flown from the soft, rounded cheeks? Hugh lifts himself on his elbow, and looks at her intently.

There is a momentary silence, then Gipsy says,—

"How soon are you going?"

"In a fortnight, so you must make the most of me."

Still she slowly sways to and fro, but she does it mechanically now, and the joyous ring has left her fresh, young voice when she says,—

"I wonder if you will ever think of us. Of course, at first you will; but after the lapse of a few months shall we be like dream-people to you—vague and shadowy?"

"You, at least, will not. I shall remember you all my life."

He speaks so earnestly, and his eyes are so full of the fire of love that her own droop before them. She tries to laugh, but fails, so says,—

"You will scarcely form any idea of papa's character and goodness before you go, for he returns only two days earlier than the date of your departure, and I so wanted you to be good friends."

Some life-long friendships have been cemented in less than forty-eight hours, and it may be so in our case."

"I hope so," thoughtfully; but she does not look at him, her eyes are cast down, and the pretty lips are tremulous.

"Gipsy," he says, reproachfully, "you have not yet said you are sorry I must go, and courtesy alone should make you do that."

"I thought we had foresworn courtesy," she answers, with an attempt at sauciness, which proves a great failure.

Hugh Stamer rises, and lays his hands upon the ropes to stay the slight motion.

"But you are sorry?" he says, confidently, and now Gipsy makes no reply, only does her best to screen her face from his observation.

She is so pretty, so dainty; and he is so young and eager. His heart throbs madly against his side; he stoops and suddenly kisses the slim throat, which flushes under his caress.

No word escapes Gipsy's lips. She sits motionless, with drooped head, and the little hands lying upon her lap tremble like leaves in a summer wind.

"Gipsy," Hugh says, in an agitated whisper, "are you angry?"

One little hand flutters up to his, but she cannot speak. Still her answer must be highly satisfactory, for the young man repeats his offence, only this time upon the pretty mouth. Then he lifts her from her seat, and she stands, a small slim figure beside him, her head scarcely reaching his broad shoulder.

He does not ask her for any vows, he does not even question if she loves him; perhaps he knows such questions would be superfluous. However that may be he keeps his arm about her, and lifts her face from the hiding-place that his breast affords.

There are tears in her eyes, and seeing them Hugh rejoices, knowing what has brought them there, feeling the parting which must come will be as grievous to her as to him.

He draws her arms about his neck, and bends down until his face is bowed upon the glory of her dark hair.

"My little love, my bonnibel; bid me stay and I will obey you, even at the risk of offending my father."

"No," she says, tremulously. "You must go, Mr. Stamer."

"Hugh, if you please. Sweetheart, from to-day you must be my first and last consideration; and it shall not be long before I return to you. I shall tell my father all about you on my arrival at New York, and he will probably hasten my return."

She does not see the little grim smile that plays about his mouth, or she might feel some fear as to his father's reception of the news.

"But you must tell him we are poor, very poor. Perhaps he won't be so pleased at your choice when he knows that. You said he adores money. What else shall you tell him? That I am stupid and ignorant, but that—that you love me?"

Hugh laughs.

"I shall certainly say nothing about stupidity and ignorance. I shall tell him you are the daintiest, prettiest little piece of womanhood in all England, that your eyes are bright as stars, your voice as sweet as—"

"Oh! hush!" cries Gipsy, covering her ears. You will make me so very vain that I shall become unbearable," and she lifts her bright, saucy face with a roguish smile, and Hugh, being only mortal, seizes the opportunity to kiss her once again.

"You are a very bold boy," she says, vividly blushing, "and I don't know what punishment you deserve."

He whispers something which heightens her colour still more, and she makes a feint of leaving him, only he has her so securely in his arms that escape is impossible.

From the garden Ted's voice is heard calling them loudly, and Gipsy hastens to smooth her hair, and arrange her ruffled laces. Then she says, swiftly,—

"Hugh, don't tell the boys yet; they will tease me unmercifully."

"I did not intend doing so. I am waiting for your father's arrival. I shall speak to him first, and can only hope I may make a favourable impression on him."

"Oh, I'm sure you will," emphatically. "He is not hard to please, and he never denies me anything."

They return to the garden together, and are greeted by Ted in a most unceremonious fashion.

"Hullo! here you are. Would it trouble you too much to remember that some folks have healthy appetites, and that we lunch at one?"

"We are above such earthly considerations," laughs Hugh, whilst Gipsy looks very conscious; "and really it is so hot, we were tempted to remain in the meadow until sun-down."

The four then adjourn to the house, Gipsy hastening to her room to put a few touches to her dress, a new ribbon about her slim waist, a fresh flower at her throat.

For a few moments Ted and Frank are left alone together. The former says, anxiously,—

"I begin to wish you had not brought Stamer here for Gipsy's sake. You know he may mean nothing by his marked attentions to her, but she accepts them as earnest, and I am inclined to believe is far from indifferent to him."

"He is too good a fellow to play fast-and-loose with any girl," Frank answers, warmly, "and it would be a splendid match for Gipsy."

"What would old Stamer say to the alliance? From all I have heard from Hugh

he is not a long remove from a miser; at all events, he worships gold with all his heart."

Then, as their guest enters, conversation drifts into another channel, and it is not again resumed, as Frank leaves the following morning, his holiday having expired, and Ted does not care to open his mind to Alf.

When Frank is gone Hugh saunters into the garden, and, finding a shady nook, throws himself upon the grass, and begins to read a letter he has drawn from his breast-pocket.

There is a frown on the young man's brow, and the line of his lips grows hard under the brown moustache as he lingers over the written words.

"DEAR HUGH,—

"I confess myself annoyed to find you are staying with Julian Rossiter, but, of course, you were utterly ignorant of his antecedents; it remains for me to enlighten you upon that point. Long ago, before I left England, I knew the man; we were friends for many years, and our first quarrel took place when your mother rejected him for my sake. But after a while the difference was partly forgotten, and intercourse between us renewed. At that time the Callisford mines were opened and we both speculated, but Rossiter to a most foolish extent.

"The result was that I lost a few hundreds, he almost all he had; and he accused me of having led him into the affair. He was compelled to sell his estates. I purchased them, and sold them again at a good profit to Lord Bradburne. From that hour we were deadly enemies; but this did not affect me in the least, as immediately after your mother died I left England for here."

"Under your present name Rossiter, of course, does not recognise you, as I only assumed it when a friend of mine died, leaving me the bulk of his fortune. Your true name is Danesworth, of the Sussex branch of Danesworth. I must request you at once to leave Rossiter's house, as I would not have you accept his hospitality one hour longer than is actually necessary. By-the-way, so far as my memory serves me, he had a daughter who, if she still lives, must be of marriageable age. Pray do not allow yourself to get entangled with her, as such a union could be productive of nothing but dissension between us; and I frankly own, unless you marry to please me, you will receive nothing from me. Your cousin Annabel has just returned from school, and, according to my ideas, is extremely pretty, and not too clever. Her fortune would add considerably to yours, and when your youth has passed you will find nothing is of value but gold."

"I expect you home by the third of September at the latest, when I desire your marriage may be arranged without delay. I do not intend Annabel to fall a prey to any needy adventurer."

"Your affectionate father,

"JACOB DANESWORTH STAMER."

Hugh rises, his brow very dark, a sombre look in his eyes.

"Must I tell Rossiter I know his past? Must I confess my real name and parentage to him, and probably lose Gipsy? Is it compatible with honour to hide both? But, if I do, how can I ask Rossiter to give his daughter to a penniless fellow, with neither trade or profession to fall back upon? As for Annabel, I'm hanged if I marry her, let come what will! The only way out of the quandary is to make a clean breast of the matter, and leave the rest to Providence. But give up Gipsy, I won't!"

His face softens then, and when he hears her step upon the path, her clear voice calling him, he hastens with a smile to meet her.

"Why have you hidden yourself away so long, dear?" she asks, as he joins her. "Oh! I believe you've been napping."

"Indeed, no!" he answers, more gravely than usual. "I have been thinking over one or two unpleasant matters, and endeavouring to see my way out of the difficulty."

"Am I in any way connected with it?" wistfully.

"Not directly," he answers, feeling a lie is excusable if it will save her pain; "it was only a message I received from my father which annoys and perplexes me a trifle."

"May I know what it is?" she questions, and he answers, lightly, "he merely expressed a wish that I should return, as Annabel has left school, and he is anxious for us to meet. He had rather hoped we should marry, but, of course, he will understand now that cannot be."

"Will he be very angry with us?" clinging to him in a sudden access of fear. "Will he insist that you shall marry her?"

"No, love, no; and even if he did I should refuse. I am my own master. But, Gipsy, if he should (and it is best to think of all contingencies), would my altered position affect your love?"

"No; oh! my dearest, no!" catching his hand and kissing it.

"And you are willing to wait for me, even for years? Because in such a case I should have my way to make."

"I would wait for you," the girl says, simply, "until we have both grown old; but I will never love you less, never be false to you. Love, love, I am frightened; it seems that a cloud has come over our lives, which, perhaps, may never pass away."

He clasps the slim form closer.

"You dear little goose, what ails you? I wish I had said nothing to you about my father's foolish whim; rest assured that I am yours now and for ever, and when he sees you he will love you."

So he strives, with pardonable sophistries, to calm her fears and bring back the smiles to the pretty lips, and his efforts certainly meet with a reward, for long before the golden noon has come Gipsy is her old bright self, full of laughing raillery, of pretty, coquettish tricks, and loving, tender ways.

She has as many moods as an April day. This bonny daughter of "old Rossiter's" is a trifling wayward and capricious, as is natural when one remembers how from infancy she has been the spoiled and petted darling of the household.

But her heart is true and fond, her nature essentially sweet and unselfish, so that in her home she is commonly known as the "Sunbeam."

How swiftly the days which follow that declaration of love pass! How bright they are, for Hugh obstinately ignores all unpleasant things whilst with her, and only at night gives himself up to disagreeable reflections.

At last the evening comes for Mr. Rossiter's return, and Hugh has determined he will say nothing to him concerning his love for Gipsy until the last night of his stay at Stokefield, hoping that in forty-eight hours he may win his way into her father's favour.

It is a glorious evening, and Ted has gone with Alf to meet Mr. Rossiter.

Gipsy sits with Hugh under a weeping ash, both apparently intent upon Poe's poems, but now and again the girl's eyes wander from the page and the warm colour steals slowly into her face; presently the smiles begin to dimple her cheeks and play about her mouth, until at last she laughs outright.

Hugh looks up in surprise.

"What is it, Gipsy? May I not share the fun?"

"Oh, yes," laughing still. "I was only wondering how papa will receive the news, and at the thought of his perplexity my gravity broke down. Why, he looks upon me quite as a child!"

Hugh's face does not reflect the merriment on hers, and he heaves a deep sigh as he says,—

"I wish the ordeal was over, so that I knew the worst."

She puts her arms about his neck.

"You silly boy," she says, softly; "what have you to fear? He will love you if only for my sake, and when he knows you well he

will think with me that you are the noblest, dearest boy in the whole world. How grave you are!" nestling closer. "I hardly know you in this Sabbatical mood. Oh!" drawing suddenly away from him; "how provoking! Here is Harry March."

As she speaks the garden-gate is swung open, and a young man of rather pleasing appearance enters.

He glances at the flushed face of the girl, the annoyed expression in Hugh's eyes, and he knows in that instant how it is with them. But if he feels any surprise, if any pain stirs at his heart, he makes no sign; but advances smilingly, and with outstretched hand.

"I should not have come this evening, knowing your father is returning, Miss Gipsy, but Mr. Hanlan asked me to call with a message to Ted, and I could find no reason why I should excuse myself."

"Ted is out; he and Alf have gone to meet father. Won't you stay until they return? They will be pleased to see you."

"No, thank you; I must be getting home; but I'll come round early in the morning."

A few more words pass between them, then Harry March takes his leave, and the lovers are alone again.

There is a momentary silence, broken by Hugh.

"That fellow is a good sort, and the only rival of whom I need be jealous. Take care you don't fall into your old weakness whilst I am away, and flirt with him."

"Oh!" says Gipsy, loftily, "my reformation is far too real for that; flirtation has no charm for me now! But when you grow weary of, and *desert* me, I shall most certainly decline upon Harry March. He has one great recommendation in my eyes, which is, he has no living relatives. Oh! I wish you had not! everything would be so smooth then! But, as it is, I am afraid; and the thought of the future is like a nightmare to me."

"Then *don't* think," laughing, in a somewhat forced way. "Take the gifts the gods send, asking no questions, and content to live only in the present."

"That sounds Epicurean, and reminds me of the motto, 'Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow ye die!'"

"I did not mean it to do so. But, Gipsy, I have a vast contempt for folks who are always going out of their way to meet or anticipate trouble. So long as one is cheerful, and keeps a brave heart, things never look so black. Hope is a good thing *alone*, but, united to courage, it is sublime!"

The sound of footsteps along the road rouses them, and Gipsy, starting from her seat cries, "It is father!" and darts like a butterfly across the garden.

In an instant she is in Mr. Rossiter's arms, caressed and caressing, her face glowing, her eyes flashing under the rays of the setting sun.

As Hugh advances, and marks the love and pride on the elder man's face, his heart rises within him. "Surely," he thinks, "loving her so well, he will deny her nothing that can add to her happiness?"

Mr. Rossiter likes his frank bearing, and welcomes him most cordially; then, hearing how near his stay is to a close, loudly exclaims, and insists that he shall remain with them, at least, for a week longer.

"I wish I could," Hugh says, heartily, "but I am due at New York on the third of next month; still, I trust I shall return in the course of a few weeks," and here he involuntarily glances at Gipsy, who avoids his look.

But the glance is intercepted and interpreted aright by Mr. Rossiter, who sighs to himself, and wonders, with a sort of vague pain, if Gipsy returns the young man's love; and, if so, how he can spare her from the home she has always made so bright?

This first evening passes pleasantly away. Gipsy sings to them the quaint old songs she knows her father loves, and plays soft little

melodies, grateful to the ear, and which Hugh will remember to the day of his death.

She is not a clever musician, as she had said, but she plays well enough to please the home-circle, and does not inflict any of those fashionable fantasies upon them, in which one has so much difficulty to discover even a thread of melody amidst the endless variations. Her voice, too, if not powerful, is sweet and bell-like in its clearness, and Hugh thinks what happiness will be his when it sounds always in his home, breathing nothing but love and tenderness for him.

The young man has never known the pleasures of a happy home; his father had always treated him with sternness, more befitting a schoolmaster than a parent, and of his mother he has but a vague and shadowy memory. His best days had been those spent at Trinity College, Cambridge, until indeed, he visited Stokefield, there to find the love of his life in "old Rossiter's madcap daughter."

The next day passes swiftly and quietly by, and the last of Hugh's stay dawns. Gipsy's spirits are at a very low ebb, and her lover catches the infection of her mood, though in a less degree.

Soon after breakfast they adjourn, as usual, to the meadow, where Hugh catches and saddles the old grey pony, and lifts Gipsy into the saddle, walking by her side round and round the meadow. The pony, like Gipsy, is very small, so that Hugh's face is well-nigh level with the girl's, a fact he is not slow to notice, and take advantage of.

As he leans towards her with a lover-like gesture he is wholly unaware that Mr. Rossiter is watching them from the garden.

"Ted!" the latter calls softly to his son, "come here," and when the young man joins him he asks, abruptly, "Is there anything between your sister and Stamer?"

"A little air at present," rejoins Ted, laughing; "nothing more substantial."

Mr. Rossiter looks vexed.

"I don't want any folly now. Remember, we know next to nothing of him, and Gipsy is—"

"The apple of your eye, father. Well, seriously speaking, I believe Stamer loves her, and she is not indifferent to him. The only fear I have concerning the affair is that old Stamer will 'turn up rough,' for he is a miserly 'old hunk,' and gold is his god."

"Has young Stamer any property in his own right?"

"Not a sou. He is entirely dependent upon the old man."

"And no trade or profession, Ted? No? Ah! that is bad. Well, I must hear what the young man says, and trust that I may be guided aright in my decision for Gipsy's sake."

"Yes, she must be our first consideration," Ted answers, gently, for the girl is the light of the home, the pride of their hearts.

This evening Gipsy dresses with especial care, because this is the last time Hugh will see her for many days, and she wishes him to carry away the memory of her as she appeared at her best. So she coils the dark masses of hair about her small head, fastening them with a pearl dagger. Her dress is white, and of some gauzy material, trimmed with lace and white ribbons; at her waist and bosom she wears clusters of vivid scarlet poppies, and about her throat a string of fine pearls, almost the only ornament saved from the wreck of their fortunes.

As she enters the dining-room, her face softly flushed, her eyes bright, yet tender, Hugh's heart sinks, lest after all their love and longing he shall lose this dainty, winsome girl, and he fears to think what a long life spent without her may mean.

She is very quiet throughout the meal, and both father and brothers forbear to question or tease her, because her secret has grown so very palpable of late, and they know what the coming parting means for her; at least, they believe so now.

Afterwards she walks with Hugh in the

garden, and the ready tears will rise and fall as he speaks of to-morrow, and she can find small comfort in his assurance that he will rejoin her in a few weeks.

It is late when they go in, and Gipsy slips upstairs to her room. Hugh enters the drawing-room, where he finds Mr. Rossiter.

"I wish to speak to you, sir."

"Very well. Sit down. One can talk more comfortably so."

Ted and Alf go out, and father and lover are alone!

CHAPTER III.

The young man hesitates a moment, then takes the chair Mr. Rossiter indicates; he is evidently confused, and not a trifle anxious.

"What is it you have to say, Stamer?" questions Gipsy's father.

Then Hugh speaks with a frank manliness which is, perhaps, his greatest charm, and recommends him to Mr. Rossiter's favour.

"I want you to understand, sir, that I love your daughter and have spoken to her. I, perhaps, should have waited for your consent, but you were once young yourself, and will remember that one cannot always control one's impulses and affections."

"I have seen that there is more than mere friendship between Gipsy and yourself, and was prepared for this. Will you tell me what she says about the matter?"

"She bade me come to you, sir; she is willing to trust me."

"You, of course, know I can give her no dowry; if you take her it must be for herself and herself only."

"That is all I wish. May I regard myself as her accepted suitor?"

"You forget," with a slightly whimsical smile, "that as yet I know nothing of you, save that your father is a reputed millionaire. Have you thought that he may be unwilling to receive an almost penniless girl into his family?"

"I have thought of that," flushing deeply, because he remembers his father's advice not to get "entangled with Rossiter's daughter," "and I feel bound to tell you how matters are with me. My father has determined I shall marry my cousin, Miss Annabel Frost, an heiress, but when he sees the girl I have chosen he can but consent to our union. Still, I have considered the pros and cons of the case, and should he resent my conduct there is nothing for me but to gain my own livelihood as best I may; but Gipsy has promised to wait for me until I can provide her a home."

"So, so," smiling; "you youngsters have arranged all these trifling details without my assistance. But," with a touch of pride, "Mr. Stamer must be made to understand that a Rossiter does not give his daughter to *any* suitor, however wealthy he may be, unless he has some other and more solid recommendation than riches, which may take wings to themselves at an moment. Can you tell me nothing of your family?"

"Very little, sir and I am afraid, from something I have recently heard from my father, that little will not impress you favourably. I debated in my own mind if I should be justified in withholding it from you, but have determined to make clean breast of it, feeling nothing good can ever come of concealment."

Whilst he speaks, Mr. Rossiter regards him perplexedly, and when he has finished says,— "Of whom is it that you remind me? In the last two days I have found myself wondering if I could have seen you before. Your eyes and the trick of your smile both seem so familiar to me."

Hugh flushes hotly.

"You knew my mother, sir; and people say that I am like her. Until a fortnight since I had no reason to believe my name was other than Stamer—"

Mr. Rossiter interrupts him hastily.

"What was your mother's name?"

"Violet Crosbie; my father is Jacob Danesworth, of the Sussex branch of the family."

Such a look of loathing and hate flashes into Mr. Rossiter's eyes, such quivering rage twitches about his lips, that Hugh is more than a little startled.

"Good Heavens! You—his son, my girl's lover? It is too horrible!"

"Sir, I know all. My father told me the true reason for this enmity between you."

"That is false," coldly. "Jacob Danesworth could never speak truth under any circumstances."

"I must beg you to remember I am his son."

"I am unlikely to forget that; I wish I had known it sooner. Now I can only hope that Gipsy, being young, will suffer no great harm, and in time love a man to whom I can give her with perfect trust."

"Do you mean," and Hugh's voice is harsh with fear, "do you mean, sir, that you will not give her to me?"

"That is precisely what I wish you to understand. Personally I like you, but there is bad blood in your veins, and soon or late it will show. Then Heaven help my poor girl, if she should be your wife!"

"You would extend your hate of my father to me—prolong the feud until our houses are like those of Montagu and Capulet. Both you and Mr. Danesworth Stamer are willing to sacrifice the happiness of your children to gratify a personal hate—"

"Silence! You are ignorant of the wrongs I have suffered at that man's hands. Sit down, and listen patiently a moment whilst I tell you my version of the story, which you may believe or not, as it pleases you. You have your mother's eyes and smile, but for that I would not stoop to explain to a child of his."

All the while he speaks in low and concentrated tones. His face, usually so pleasant to look upon, seems suddenly fossilised, and his eyes are full of malignant rage.

"I was Violet Crosbie's accepted lover, but your father (my so-called friend) won her from me by lies and subtleties, until in a moment of pique she married him, to regret it her whole life-long. He was poor (comparatively), and I rich. So when the Callisford mines were opened, he came to me and borrowed moneys ostensibly to purchase shares.

"I did not then know his treachery, and although he had married the only woman I ever loved, he was very dear to me, partly for his own sake, and partly for hers.

"I, too, had married; and my wife, a good, true woman, warned me against my friend. With woman's instinct she read him aright; but I, like a blind fool, trusted to him, and what I thought my own superior judgment, so working into his hands, and making shipwreck of my life and fortune. Day by day he came to me with stories of the fortunes to be realised through the Callisford mines, and told me that he should purchase other shares.

"Gipsy was born then, and I thought I should like to add to her fortune, which would be small, owing to the fact that I had also three boys to provide for. So I bought shares largely, and dreamed dreams of fabulous wealth; then woke one morning to find that they were valueless, and I a beggar, save for my wife's small income.

"It transpired, too, that Jacob Danesworth had invested, but very little in the concern, and that when he was requested to render an account (he was treasurer to the company) he refused to do so. He fled the country in secrecy, and probably assumed the name of Stamer, the further to disguise his identity. But before his defalcations were discovered my home was in the market; he bought it, and sold it again at immense profit to Lord Bradburne. Altogether he netted a very considerable sum. Before he went your mother and I accidentally met, and I then learnt by what falsehoods she had been betrayed, and knew, too, that she loved me still; the knowledge of her husband's treachery and crime

doubtless hastened her end. She died before he could get her away.

"Judge now for yourself, Hugh Stamer, if I would give my child to the son of such a fiend as my one-time seeming friend."

"Will you condemn us both to suffer for my father's sin?" Hugh asks, hoarsely; "and how can I tell if your statement is true? I must have proofs before I believe such wild accusations."

"You want proofs—you shall have them."

Still with the same stony deliberation, he rises, and opening a desk takes from it a letter written on highly-glazed paper, and still retaining a faint odour of lilies. The writing is in a delicate, feminine hand, which Hugh instantly recognises as his mother's from old letters he had once found in her drawers.

Mechanically he reads,—

"**MY DEAR FRIEND.**—When we spoke together yesterday you learned that I was not false to you as once I seemed. Now, alas! I must beg you to pardon my husband even a greater sin than his early one against you—for my boy's sake I ask this great boon of you. From his own lips I learned last night that he has systematically worked your ruin to revenge himself on you for having won and kept my love. More I dare not say; but when you think of me let your thoughts be kind, for my lot is very heavy—my heart is broken.

"**VIOLET DANESWORTH.**"

Hugh sinks into a chair, and buries his face in his arms. Not a word, not a groan bursts from him, and Mr. Rossiter stands over him with an expression akin to triumph in his eyes.

In this hour the man's whole nature is transformed, and he can even take pleasure in Hugh's misery and shame. It seems part-payment for the years of anguish he has suffered through Jacob Danesworth.

Thus he stands, with knitted brows and flashing eyes. Suddenly he reaches forward, and touches the young man lightly upon the shoulder.

"You will forget soon," he says, coldly. "You are his son!"

"And my mother's! For her sake, by all the love you bore her, by all her anguish, and her broken heart, have compassion upon me! For Gipsy's sake I will forego parent, home, and wealth. Try me—test me as you will—only don't forbid me to hope. Think a moment what your decision will mean for Gipsy! If my misery is nothing to you—if my entreaties fail to touch you—surely you will not be blind and deaf to hers."

"She is Rossiter; and when she knows the stain upon your name, the treachery and guilt of your father, she will feel, with me, that such a union as you propose can never be. I am sorry for you; but you must suffer for Jacob Danesworth's crimes."

"Yet the Mosaic law was long ago repealed, and I have heard that the 'sins of the fathers' shall not be visited upon the children.'"

He stretches out one hand to Mr. Rossiter; it trembles like a weak woman's, and the veins are blue and swollen.

"I have said all that is necessary. My decision is final."

Hugh rises.

"Then whatever happens lies at your door, and you alone can be held guilty."

"I rely upon you to bring no persuasion to bear on my child, so that she leaves home in secrecy, and with you."

"Thank Heaven, I still hold my honour intact! You have nothing to fear from me. I will leave Gipsy to-morrow, promising to see her no more until she is of age, when she may act for herself."

"Thanks for the concession. In three years she will forget her girlish love-dream. I have no fears on that score."

Hugh moves to the window and looks out. His face is white and set, and in his eyes is a very midnight of despair. Long he stands there, until the silence of the room grows

painful, and Mr. Rossiter breaks it by saying, inconsequently,—

"Well!"

Hugh turns and confronts him, looking in that moment so like the dead Violet as Julian Rossiter had last seen her that for a space his heart relents; but he gives no sign of this, and Hugh says,—

"I am glad if you can believe it well. At present, I cannot share your hopeful view of the case. Of course, after what has passed I must leave here with all possible speed; but you will give me shelter for to-night, and grant me an interview with Gipsy in the morning? It is not much to ask of a man who has ruined one's life," with a bitter laugh. "One other favour I have to beg. Perhaps you will grant it for the sake of the love you professed to feel for my mother."

"Young man, the world has used me too roughly for me to wince under the gibes of an angry fellow-creature. Ask what you will, and if it is in my power to grant it I will—for her sake."

"Then before we (Gipsy and I) meet, tell her this story as you have told it me. Let her know why I set her free—for the present."

"It would be well for her to remain in ignorance of the reasons for which I decline to receive you as a son. Pity may keep her love alive the longer, and it is expedient she should forget."

"You expect too great a sacrifice from me; if you will not explain all I myself will do. She may know me as the son of a fortunate felon, she may learn all my shame; but she shall never believe me false. Perhaps she, too, will hate me—for I do not doubt you will tutor her well—but she cannot despise me."

"I will do as you wish. Most men would have made a different choice to yours, but let it be as you will."

Hugh moves to the door; there he pauses and looks full into the other's eyes.

"I have a conviction that you will regret this night's work; for Gipsy's sake I hope it may not be so. No, thank you, we will not go through the farce of shaking hands. I do not feel particularly grateful or affectionate towards you."

He goes out and upstairs, slowly and heavily, to his room. There are tiny tables scattered here and there, each with its vase of sweet-scented flowers, which her hands have arranged; the window is open and the clustering honeysuckle creeps in, to add its perfume to that of the gathered flowers.

Hugh sits down and pushes aside the curtains, looks down upon the fair garden where he and Gipsy have so often walked, but where they will never walk again. A groan breaks from his lips, and he clenches his hands in his impotent rage and revolt against fate.

"Is it not enough to know the name of which I have been so proud is stained by treachery and theft (for it was theft); is it not enough to know this, without having the loss of my love added to my burden?"

Thus his thoughts run, and his heart is very bitter against all the world. It seems to him in this hour that every man's hand is against him, and he, like some wild thing driven to bay, has turned upon the world with all the fury of despair.

The long, slow night wears on; the grey dawn comes, and he wonders how Gipsy will receive the news; with what words, what a look, will she greet him! He does not guess his story is already known to her; that on the snowy bed in her dainty, lavender-scented room, the girl is lying face downwards, the sheets thrust into her mouth to choke the sobbing laughter which will rise from her heart to her lips, almost strangling her. He cannot see how the nails pierce into the delicate palms of the little clenched hands, nor know the cry which rises from her soul, "My love! my love! I cannot let you go! Oh, Heaven! that I were dead!"

Then come the cheery sounds of everyday life; the pleasant stir in the rooms below, the crowing of cocks, the lowing of the cows

in the meadow beyond; nothing is changed—nothing save life for these two lovers.

Hugh rises and tosses his things into a portmanteau, then waits until the breakfast-bell rings; wondering much if Gipsy is yet down, he goes to the breakfast-room to find it untenanted, save by Ted and Alf.

Both greet him cordially. It is evident his father's crimes have not altered their regard for him. Ted excuses Mr. Rossiter on the plea that he feels Stamer would rather see him no more.

"And Gipsy?" the young man questions, glancing round with weary eyes.

His face is so haggard, his voice so changed, that Ted says impulsively,—

"Don't take it too much to heart old fellow, it must come right in the end, and Gipsy will see you at nine in the meadow."

Alf urges him to eat, plies him with all manner of viands, but all to no purpose, and at last in mercy they leave him to his own most bitter reflections. He seizes an early opportunity to leave them, and makes his way at once to the meadow.

As he enters he sees Gipsy, and hearing the gate swing back, she turns. When he sees the change one night of anguish has wrought in her, the fear and woe in her lovely eyes, his manhood melts, and he stretches out his hands to her with a groan. With a low, wild cry she runs to him, throws her arms about him, sobbing madly.

"Do not, do not leave me! Oh! Hugh, take me with you—take me with you!"

When he knows she does not hate him, or shrink from him, when he feels that his father's sin has not weakened her love, half the burden is lifted from his heart. He raises her face between his hands and kisses it again and again.

"Love, my bonny love! This has made no difference in your regard?"

"Yes, yes, it has; for now I love you more fondly, more deeply, than before, because—because I pity you. Oh, my poor Hugh! Oh, my heart! my heart! how cruel life is!"

Cruel—ah! yes, and this is but her first draught of the bitter waters. She has yet to learn, by terrible experience, that one woe follows another in swift succession, that the evil predominates over the good in this world.

"Tell me," she says faintly, "what you will do? Are you angry with me because my father has treated you so harshly?"

"Angry, child, no; but it is very terrible that we must suffer for a sin sinned seventeen years ago; that through no fault of our own we must be parted for ever."

"No, no! Oh, do not say for ever! How shall I live without you? Surely, surely father will relent when he sees how dear you are to me; and you, dear Hugh, will not allow Mr. Stamer to come between us."

"No, love, I owe him no obedience and no love," with gathering scorn in his eyes. "You are first and last, best and dearest with me now and for all time. How bitter your heart must be against him?"

"It is; but, dear, the hour is going so quickly let us forget him, and speak of ourselves and our future. Oh!" breaking down suddenly, "I cannot bear this misery. I am not strong enough; I am too young to be so very, very wretched."

As she clings to him, and as her tears fall fast upon his hands, he is tempted to forget the promise he has given Mr. Rossiter. How can he leave her so lonely, so crushed with this her first trial? He knows what she has yet to learn, that this hour, despite its anguish, is less cruel than the months of waiting, of suspense and fear that she must endure; but he dare not hint at this, and he resolutely puts from him the temptation that has assailed him so fiercely.

"Gipsy," he says, hoarsely, "listen, darling, I am not to see you again until you are of age. It is a long time to wait, but we are young, and we shall be faithful each to the other and so soon as you have attained your majority I will come for you, and in the meanwhile, I

shall be working hard to win an independent standing for myself. Rest assured, darling, I will no longer touch money I now know was obtained by fraud and treachery. Heaven grant I may one day restore it all to you. Oh, love!" as her heavy sobs break the sweet stillness of the summer morning, "for my sake, be brave. I cannot leave you thus, my darling heart; this is more cruel than even I imagined."

The small figure clasped so closely in his arms is writhing with emotion, and sobs seem to convulse her. Hugh's honest face is white and set, his teeth clenched. He feels miserably; he can offer her no consolation; in this hour of supreme anguish words are so cold and inadequate to tell all that is in his heart. So he is silent until she is spent with weeping, then he leads her to the trunk of a fallen tree, and sitting down draws her beside him.

"I must be going soon, little wife," he says, "and I want you to listen to me for a moment. When I am away your father will probably reiterate my father's crimes, and endow me with like attributes, until you will be ashamed of your choice."

"No, no!" she interrupts, passionately, "and I have frequently heard that sons resemble their mothers most—your mother was a good woman."

"Thank you, Gipsy," he says, gratefully, "but you must let me finish what I feel it is my duty to state clearly. There must be no misunderstanding between us. It is your father's wish that we should not correspond—can you stand the test of absence and silence for nearly three years? Remember, you will have ample time to reflect upon the step you have taken, to weigh my merits (if I have any) against my faults, and contrast the dishonour under which I live with your own unsullied name and integrity."

"If you, too, had sinned I should love you still with all my heart and with all my life."

He stoops to kiss the cheeks so flushed and swollen with weeping, then resumes,—

"Other men, my dear, will covet the prize I have won, will offer you perhaps more than I can ever give, for I am not going back to a life of wealth and indolence, and it may be you will learn at last that I am not first with you. No, do not speak yet. In such a case, my love, you will write me to that effect, for I could not endure to believe you mine, and returning to claim you find you had given yourself to another man. I leave you my address, and at any time, when I have left my father's house, Annabel will forward me what letters may arrive. Remember, too, my darling, that I shall not blame you over-much (because you are very young, and unused to the ways of the world), neither will I spoil my life because you are lost to me. And now—and now it must be good-bye."

He catches her to him in a madness of love and anguish. His frank, honest face shows very white and miserable in the full glow of the August sun; hers is hidden on his breast.

"Kiss me," he says, hoarsely, "kiss me, my heart!"

Heart to heart, lip to lip, thus they stand, feeling all the world is against them and joy is a thing of the long ago past. Then Gipsy leans back a little, looks into his face with tear-filled eyes.

"I will never fail you, but day by day I will love you more dearly, more truly. You have called me your wife, and in Heaven's eyes I believe I am. Oh, Hugh! oh, my love! how can I be false to you?"

There has been a long, long silence; the dragon flies are sporting on the stream, the birds are singing gaily all around.

Gipsy lifts her head and looks out through her tears upon the lovely world, with eyes that fail to take in the beauty of it. She presses her hands to her temples in a bewildered way, then laughs lowly, bitterly.

"Go, go! Why do you stay, seeing we must part? Go, before I am mad with pain!"

He strains her to him, lays his lips once

again to hers, then, with a groan, puts her away, and hastens from the meadow, not daring to look back.

Gipsy watches him until he disappears in the house, then she flings herself down among the long, lush grass, and laughs long and softly. It is here that Ted finds her.

"Come in, dear," he says, gently. "Hugh has gone."

She looks at him blankly, then suffers him to lift her in his arms and carry her into the house, not knowing that all her happy days are over.

CHAPTER IV.

In a handsome room of a palatial house in New York, two men stand face to face—father and son—but as unlike in feature as in character. The young man is very white, and stern, travel-stained too, and in his haggard eyes is a gloomy look, wholly new to them. The father is visibly agitated; it may be, despite all past harshness, he is really proud and fond of his son; it may be, too, that his crime has suddenly become odious to him, now that it is known to the young man.

However this may be, he trembles and quails under the fixed regard of those miserable eyes.

He asks, in a quavering voice,—

"And you have determined to leave me; you elect a life of poverty, in preference to one of ease?"

"I have given you my final answer; I will not live on the proceeds of crime. When I leave your house to-day I leave it for good, unless, indeed, you will restore to Julian Rossiter what you robbed him of so long ago."

Mr. Stamer (for by this name he insists upon being known) breaks into a tremulous kind of passion.

"It was all fair! I swear it was! It was only a struggle for supremacy—and I won! I had the brains, and that poor fool the money! Have I been so bad a father that you will believe any lie Rossiter may choose to tell?"

"I believe my mother's written word," coldly; "I could not rely even upon your oath."

"And may I inquire how you intend to live?" with a sneer.

"I hardly know yet; I only feel that I am strong enough, and sufficiently in earnest, to win a place for myself in the world."

"You understand, that in the hour you leave me you forfeit all claim to my remembrance; that not one farthing of my wealth shall come to you?"

"I am aware of that. You fear I should refund what you gained by so much crime. I know now why you left England; and I wish to Heaven I had died before I learned what manner of man you are!"

Mr. Stamer winces under the words. For a moment pride struggles with parental love—he is growing old, and there is none to love him if this one son turns his back upon him—so, after a pause, he says, in a weak voice,—

"If I consent to your marriage with Rossiter's daughter, will you forego your Quixotic ideas, and remain with me?"

"I cannot afford to beggar myself of honour; and Rossiter will never give Gipsy to me. When she comes to me it will be without his approbation or consent. Because I am your son he hates me, and is glad to revenge himself upon me."

"Then why think of her?" querulously; "there is Annabel; why not marry her? You could not have the same objection to sharing her money as mine—it was made honestly!"

"If ever I marry my wife will be Miss Rossiter! Pray consider that subject closed. Now I am going, father, and, because of the tie between us, I should like to part with a semblance of friendship," and here Hugh offers his hand.

But Mr. Stamer bursts into a violent passion.

"Curse you! Go! May all that you attempt prove a failure! May you suffer privation and want, so that in the end you crawl to my feet and beg for bread!"

Hugh answers, calmly—

"Do not fear that I shall ever seek assistance from you; if things come to the worst, I can break stones along the roadside. I might sink lower, for no man degrades himself by honest labour, however menial."

"Don't read me a homily, sir!" shrieks the old man; "go, go! I hate you, I—I curse you!"

He falls into his chair, an inert, helpless, frame; and his son, passing out of the room, closes the door upon him.

Hugh would be not a little surprised, could he know what follows, when the sound of his steps has died away in the hall, and doubtless touched.

Mr. Stamer rises and drags his weary, feeble limbs across the room, and watches from the window to see the last of that noble figure as it leaves home behind for ever. Hugh issues from the house, and then the old man lifts his hand in supplication, and moans out,—

"My son, my son! come back—come back! I will do anything you ask, anything you demand—only stay with me. I am old, and lonely, and wretched."

But his querulous accents do not reach Hugh, and he is fain to follow him into the busy street, and there entreat him to return. Then as he looks he sees Annabel coming towards the house; next he notices her quick, glad gesture as she confronts Hugh, and slips her little hand in his confidingly. How he longs to hear what passes between them! Will she lure him back to home?

"Hugh," the girl says, "dear Hugh, how glad I am to see you—but surely you are ill! How white and harassed you look!"

He smiles faintly.

"Annabel, I should have passed you in the street. You are so changed since we met—so grown up, and a fashionable young lady, too. I expected to meet a schoolgirl!"

"I am eighteen," with pretty demureness, "and I am out now."

She draws her slim figure to its full height, and regards him with half-laughing, half-serious blue eyes, which are clear and candid as a child's. She is very pretty in a blonde way, and there is a sort of appealing look upon her face which has a charm for many, and perhaps would exercise some influence upon Hugh, only that his heart is given so wholly to Gipsy.

"Come back with me to the house," she says, entreatingly. "I've so much to tell you, and so many questions to ask."

"I shall never come back any more;" then briefly he tells her the story of his parting with his father, and as she listens the tears fill her forget-me-not eyes, and rain down her cheeks.

People pass them, and glance curiously at them—the strong, honest-looking young fellow, the pretty, fashionably-dressed girl. Hugh sees this and draws her into an un-frequented byway, so that Mr. Stamer can see them no longer. Then he sinks once more into his chair, moaning to himself.

"Her voice—her smile—her own boy. Oh! my son, my son!"

"What are you going to do?" questions Annabel, after a pause. "You will be very, very poor. Hugh, oh! Hugh, I am afraid for you," and she clasps her little, gloved hands about his arm in affectionate solicitude, which if he chooses will rapidly develop into love, for since her early childhood he has been a hero to her.

"I shall certainly be poor," he answers, gravely, "but I intend to turn my one talent to account. One day I shall be famous."

"But in the meanwhile how will you live? You must have food and clothing. Have you any money at all?" in sudden fear.

"A little," striving to speak cheerfully.

Annabel suddenly takes out her purse—a dainty blue and gold trifle.

"Take this," she says. "I really do not want it, my allowance is so liberal. Oh! don't be angry with me. Accept it as a loan, and, Hugh, if you will give me an address I will forward you sufficient to maintain you until you can get employment. How proud you are!" petulantly, as he begins to refuse her offer. "After all, it is only a loan, and you shall pay me interest upon it, if that is any satisfaction to you."

"Upon that condition, then, I accept," smiling, yet touched, "and I will send you word what I intend doing. At present I think of returning to England. I shall not feel my changed position so greatly there as here—and I shall be nearer the woman I love."

She looks at him blankly, then says, a little brokenly,—

"May Heaven be with you, Hugh, wherever you go. Now, I shall say good-bye, but this evening I shall hear from you, and will forward the loan I spoke of; then with a handclasp they part, and Hugh saunters into a respectable, but poor part of the city to seek a lodging suitable to his means.

Six months have passed, and Hugh has long been established in small but comfortable lodgings in the neighbourhood of Leicester-square.

Thanks to Annabel's loan he has suffered no privations, although he is compelled to live frugally. He does not guess, and will never know, how the girl obtained the large sum of money she had forwarded him. Afraid to excite her uncle's suspicion or anger if she asked so great a sum of him, she had disposed of all her most valuable jewels, and that without a pang. Was not Hugh's welfare more to her than all precious stones?

He, in the meantime, has been singularly fortunate; many of his articles have found their way into popular journals and dailies, and in his leisure hours (which are few) he is busily engaged upon a one-volume novel.

His life is a lonely one, but he cheers himself with the thought that each week, each month brings nearer the time for his meeting with Gipsy, and work is good, being done for her dear sake.

He sometimes hears of her from Frank, who "looks him up," and now and again tells him the Stokefield news.

In a short time his name begins to be known in literary circles; he is spoken of as a "man of promise," "a fellow not devoid of genius," and Frank takes care to acquaint Gipsy with these facts.

One morning Hugh Stamer wakes to find himself famous; his novel is out, and is creating already a wonderful sensation. There is scarcely an adverse critic upon it, and Hugh can hardly realise such encomiums as are being showered upon it can be for him.

The first edition sells with wonderful rapidity, and it is the same with a second and a third, and all the reading world is on the *qui vive* to know more of the man who, with one leap, has sprung so far up the ladder of fame; looks out anxiously for the new work upon which, report says, he is engaged.

Hugh does not alter his mode of life now that prosperity is coming to him, save that once in a while he accepts an invite to some grande's house, where he is feted and lionised as the new author who has all but set the Thames on fire.

So another six months passes, and Hugh has contrived to repay Annabel, and to put by a small sum with a view to furnishing a home for Gipsy when the time shall come.

Then his second novel appears, and is more warmly received even than his first, and his position is established, his fame secure.

Through all the long months of the year Annabel's letters have reached him regularly, but not a line comes from his father; consequently, one September day, when he opens a letter in his handwriting, he is considerably astonished. It runs thus:—

"We parted almost in enmity, but you are my son, and I have a great regard for a man who does well by himself, so that I am willing to be on a friendly footing with you. This overture should have come from you, but I waive that, and will proceed to business."

"I am coming to England with Annabel and her companion Miss Tabitha Brown, and shall be obliged if you will hire a place for us not too far from town, so that we can visit you when we choose. You need not fear men will know me, and so put your virtuous self to the blush. I am so changed that none will recognise in Jacob Stamer the man they knew as Jacob Danesworth."

"I do not ask you to share our temporary home—I should not appreciate a refusal of my offer—and you need have no fear that any portion of my despised wealth will ever come to you. You may expect us on the fourteenth of October."

JACOB STAMER."

So it comes about that Annabel, with her uncle and companion, who is also her chaperone, are inducted into a villa a few miles out of London, whose banks slope gently down to the Thames, and Hugh comes and goes how and when he chooses.

The change in his father moves him to pity; he is so bowed, so aged, so tremulous; and now and again the mask of sternness he has so long worn slips down, and reveals him as a loving parent, to the astonishment both of Hugh and Annabel.

The months fleet quickly by, and when the season begins, a lady friend introduces the girl to society, and soon her wealth and her prettiness win for her the title "belle of the season."

She finds great pleasure in her new life, enters into it with a wonderful zest, yet does not lose that freshness and simplicity which constitute her greatest charm, neither does she lose her love of homely pleasures and domestic pursuits; and yet there is a great change in her—a change which develops her beauty, makes it tenderer, graver, more womanly; and the reason for it is that she loves Hugh with all the fervour of a first passion.

Thus things are when Gipsy Rossiter inherits a small fortune from her maiden godmother; and insists that she and her father shall dissipate some of it by spending a few weeks in town.

Ted has taken a house and offices in the neighbouring town; Alf is away, bound for Barbadoes, and Frank at London; so they let the house, and taking lodgings in the vicinity of St. James's Park, prepare for a round of gaieties.

An old friend of Mr. Rossiter's, named Mrs. Trelawney, undertakes the charge of Gipsy, and not knowing her love-story, prophesies a brilliant match for her. The girl only smiles, and whispers to her heart that now she shall see Hugh, and all the pain and anguish of the past eighteen months will be forgotten.

At the first ball she attends she meets Annabel and Miss Tabitha Brown; and whilst sitting in an alcove the latter lady, who has begged an introduction of her hostess, is brought to her.

Small and spare, with hair and complexion of the same drab hue, light eyes and thin lips, she makes a very poor impression upon Gipsy; but she tolerates her, because she hopes to hear something of Hugh.

Miss Brown skilfully leads the conversation up to him; she has been well-drilled by Mr. Stamer, and knows her part to perfection. She contrives to connect Hugh's and Annabel's names in a way that rouses a dim suspicion and vague pain in Gipsy's heart, and having done this she takes her leave affectionately, expressing a hope that they shall meet again.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER this Gipsy often meets Miss Tabitha and Annabel at the houses of mutual acquaintances, and the former contrives always to keep the girls apart. Her task is rendered far easier by the arrival of Harry March, who at once attaches himself to Gipsy.

The girl, unsuspecting, and well-pleased to see a familiar face among so many strange ones, welcomes him cordially, and continues to treat him with the old frankness. He seems to her a bit of the past, when she and Hugh had been so happy in their mutual love. She never thinks what construction the malicious ones will place upon their friendship, and unwittingly helps to work out her doom.

When Miss Tabitha speaks of the young man she answers readily, and in terms of highest, most unqualified praise; tells her, too, that he is his uncle's (Sir Geoffrey March's) heir, and will one day be a very wealthy man. And the soured spinster listens, resolving to make good use of the information, having an eye to the reward Jacob Stamer has promised if she succeeds in separating his son and Rossiter's daughter.

One evening she persuades Hugh to accompany them to the Lyceum, having ascertained that the Rossiters and Harry will be present. Once seated, her eyes rove round the house, and presently discover her victim.

"Mr. Stamer," she says, smiling and displaying the gold wire in her teeth very liberally, "do you see Miss Rossiter, your old flame? That is Mr. March with her, and folks say it is to be a match between them."

Hugh looks annoyed, but following the direction of her eyes, meets those of Gipsy, very bright and eager. She bows to him and he longs to go to her, but their intercourse is limited to a mere sign of recognition; and he has to endure all the pangs of jealousy as he watches Harry bending over her, paying her little delicate attentions, chatting gaily to her between the acts. To-night, for the first time, a doubt of her truth stirs in his heart.

And so it is from day to day that the leaven of Miss Tabitha's malice works in the brains of these two ill-fated lovers. Hugh grows bitter, and Gipsy reckless. When he is present she flirts outrageously, and meets his frown with defiant face.

Men remark amongst themselves that "that little Rossiter girl is developing into a most audacious coquette," and some add, "it is a pity she is losing her pretty, half-rustic air."

She grows paler and thinner too, and her laughter has a forced, unreal sound in it. Furtively she watches Hugh and Annabel, and with a woman's quick intuition sees the girl loves her cousin; sees, too, his invariable kindness to her, and begins to believe Miss Tabitha's hints concerning an engagement between them.

One day, in her desperate pain, she determines to learn the worst, and, finding Miss Tabitha especially talkative, plies her with questions, and, at last asks, with a superb assumption of indifference,—

"Is there any truth in the report that an arrangement has been made between Mr. Stamer and Miss Frost?"

The cat-like eyes watching her see no change in her face, no spasm of pain contract her lips, and Miss Tabitha wonders if she has forgotten. Then she answers boldly,—

"Oh, yes; they are to be married at the close of the season. I think the match a very suitable one; do not you, Miss Rossiter?"

"Certainly," in a harsh voice, but she screens her face behind her fan. "Miss Frost is very pretty, rich, and you say amiable."

"She is all that," with emphasis. "I suppose I am to congratulate you upon your engagement with Mr. March?"

"Oh, nothing is settled yet," Gipsy answers, coolly, all her pride in arms; but from her tone Miss Tabitha infers that her guess is nearer the truth than she had dared to hope.

No need any longer for *finesse*; Hugh will probably marry Annabel from pique, and her reward is sure.

She moves to another part of the room, and for awhile Gipsy sits motionless behind the ferns and hydrangeas, listening to the trickling of the fountains, the haunting strains of "Our Last Waltz," and through all her heart sends up a cry of "False!—false!—false!"

Then the hostess seeks her out, and to Gipsy's horror Hugh is with her.

"Miss Rossiter, there is a scarcity of ladies, so I cannot allow you to sit out. Mr. Stamer, Miss Rossiter," and so leaves them.

Oh! now, if they will but speak out, all may be well! Hugh takes the small, extended hand, and does not retain it in his. His face is dark and his eyes brooding.

"May I have this dance. It is a very impromptu request, but—"

He pauses, and Gipsy answers, with white but steady lips,—

"I should like it."

And in a moment they are whirling round the room, whilst the music beats into her heart and brain and maddens her. She can remember only the words of that sad song:

"O, love, for the last time whisper low;
Say you love me, darling, once before I go!
Only to-night, only to-night, bark to the old
refrain,
Only to-night, just for to-night, but never for
me again!"

She is going mad! Oh, Heaven! how can she bear it? His arm about her, his breath upon her uplifted face, his heart beating upon hers and his love dead! Suddenly she stops.

"Take me to a seat," she pants. "I am ill."

Without a word he leads her from the whirling throng. Oh! now is the time to explain away all that appears so evil!

"Surely, surely," he thinks, "she will tell me all. I may be needlessly jealous."

But the watchful eyes of Miss Tabitha have spied them out, and she hastens to proffer her assistance.

"Go away, Mr. Stamer," she says, pleadingly. "Miss Rossiter is best with me."

Reluctantly he goes, and so the chance is lost, never to return again. When he has gone Gipsy looks round in a scared way.

"Will you find Mrs. Trelawney for me?" she asks; but Miss Tabitha has no intention of leaving her again.

"My dear, I do not like to go yet; you are so far from well. Oh, Mr. March"—signalling to Harry, who joins them rapidly—"will you bring Mrs. Trelawney. Miss Rossiter is ill."

Mrs. Trelawney hastens at once to her young friend.

"My dear, I am so grieved."

But the girl rises hurriedly, and stretches out her hands in a helpless way.

"Take me away," she wails, "oh, take me from this dreadful place," and suffers Harry to lead her from the room.

But the next day she fulfils all her engagements, only it is noticed that she is pale and absent-minded; looks the very ghost of the girl who had come to town a few weeks since so rich in beauty, happiness, and love.

Mrs. Trelawney and her father grow anxious as the days lengthen into weeks, and she grows paler and more fragile, inclined, too, to fitful bursts of merriment, usually followed by hysterical weeping.

But when they urge her to return home she shakes her head, and steadfastly refuses. To herself she says she must look upon her lover to the last, although seeing him gives her added pain, lacerates her heart anew.

She flirts desperately, too, as if she seeks forgetfulness thus, or, perhaps, from a fierce desire to make others suffer even as she does.

One day Harry March finds her alone, and taking her hot, thin hand in his, says,—

"Gipsy, my dear, I have been waiting for this opportunity a long time. Will you answer me one question frankly and without reserva-

tion? Is there anything between you and Stamer now?"

Her large, dark eyes meet his unflinchingly.

"Nothing," she says, and shivers a little. "He is going to marry his cousin, Miss Frost."

"Then I may hope?" eagerly. "Sweet-heart, you know I have loved you all along, but I have feared to speak until now. Will you try to think of me as something nearer and dearer than a friend? Will you give me the right to love and protect you always?"

She hardly feels any pity for him; her heart is so sore with her own pain. She only answers languidly that she shall never marry, and he must try to forget her; and seeing she is scarcely in a fit mood to be reasoned with he desists.

After this day she grows perceptibly weaker, and can no longer keep her engagements. Greatly alarmed Mr. Rossiter calls in a physician, who looks grave, and shakes his head over her; then orders her back to Stokefield at once.

Frank has left town more than a month now, having taken a responsible post in a branch establishment of his firm at Constantinople, so there is no one to mediate between herself and Hugh; and, after all, she thinks "of what avail would mediation be, seeing his heart has gone from me?"

So on the eve of her departure she writes him a little note, which seals her doom and his, and confirms his belief in her faithlessness.

"Miss Rossiter has great pleasure in giving Mr. Stamer his freedom, feeling sure such a course must result in happiness to both."

A long, airy room, with crimson and white hangings, and on a bed, painfully thin, with a bright spot on either cheek, lies Gipsy—pretty Gipsy Rossiter—dying. By her side sits her father; at the foot of the bed is Ted, his face hidden in his hands. She stirs slightly.

"Daddy, if you had never parted us—oh, my dear! my dear! don't grieve so; but—but if you had been less harsh to him—I might have been strong and happy now."

She does not mean to reproach him, but the long pent-up anguish of her soul will at last have vent.

"Oh!" she wails, "I loved him, I loved him so dearly, and it broke my heart to lose him."

She laughs then in a dreadful way.

"You see I lived by his love, and when that was taken from me I knew I should die. Oh! oh! sweetheart, love! how cruel you have been!"

"Hush! hush, my dearest!" Ted cries, starting forward and kneeling by her. "You break our hearts. Tell me, Gipsy, what can I do for you? Is there anything you wish?"

"Yes," slowly, "I should like to see Frank and Alf, but that cannot be, and—and—oh, father! Ted! I cannot die without a word of good-bye to Hugh. When he knows I am dying he will come to me. He will be sorry for me, and she will not grudge me one hour's happiness."

When Hugh received Gipsy's note his doubts of her truth were confirmed, and his pride rose in passionate revolt against his love, because he believed he had been so wantonly duped.

In a moment of pique he went to Annabel. She, at least, loved him, and had proved her love in a hundred ways.

"My dear," he said, and his voice was hoarse with pain, "the woman I loved is false to me. I do not pretend that I shall ever love you so well as I did her, but I will be a true and kind husband if you will accept me," and Annabel had kissed him, and been almost content.

So on the day Ted arrives at Hugh's chambers he finds them empty, and the landlady informs him Mr. Stamer has gone away

to be married, and gives him the senior Stamer's address.

Full of anger Ted hastens to the villa, and forces his way in. He catches a glimpse of the dainty-robed figures of pretty bridesmaids, hears the ripple of light laughter; then he is shown into a room, and bidden to wait for Hugh.

Presently the door is opened, and the bridegroom enters dressed for the ceremony. He starts back, seeing Ted, then coldly inquires what brings him here.

"Gipsy is dying," Ted says, bluntly, "and you have murdered her; but she prays you to come to her that she may say good-bye."

Hugh staggers back against the wall.

"Dying! and I her murderer! I don't understand!" passing his hand over his temples in a dazed way.

"It is this marriage of yours that has worked us so much misery? Was she not pretty and good enough to retain your love? Truly the Danesworth blood has shown in you as my father said it would. But there is no time to bandy words. Will you come?"

"I will come," speaking like one in a dream.

Then he goes away to tell Annabel there will be no wedding this day. Aye, and no wedding for him in any day to come.

Gipsy is sinking fast; but when the young men enter she is quite conscious, and greets Hugh with a bright smile.

"I knew you would come," she says, brokenly, "although they said you would not. I could not die alone. Oh, love—love! it has been so hard; but it is all over now. Yet, oh! if you could have been true to me to the end!"

A terrible sob breaks from him, and in half articulate words he tells all his suffering and his doubts—all his unswerving love—and when he finishes her face is bright as that of an angel.

"Sit by me," she says. "Hold me—my head upon your breast—I would wish to die in your arms."

"Gipsy," entreats Mr. Rossiter, "forgive me—say you forgive me, child!"

"I did that long ago; and now—now I am very happy. All of you kiss me, but Hugh last of all."

They bend over her and kiss her once, knowing now the parting is near at hand. Then Hugh lays his lips to hers, that have grown so cold, and even as he does so her head falls back upon his shoulder, and in one horrible shudder he knows that she is dead.

He lays her amongst the pillows, not so white now as her sweet, still face, and falling on his knees by the bed hides his face in the bed-clothes.

He hears the sobs of Mr. Rossiter and Ted, but he scarcely heeds them. He only knows that he has lost her for ever and for ever. He stretches out his hand, and clasps one of hers in his. Alas! alas! to think it can never now return his pressure!

"Never again will that dear head ache,
Never again will that true heart break,
Never again will those sad eyes wake
From that calm sleep."

And the darkness of despair gathers all around and about him.

In after days Annabel marries Harry March, but Hugh lives alone; and although folks wonder why he does not take a wife none guess his love-story or its tragic ending, or that he and the girl who was so dear to him suffered so cruelly for a sin that was not their own.

[THE END.]

How can a man learn to know himself? By reflection never—only by action. In the measure in which he seeks to do his duty shall he know what is in him. But what is his duty? The demand of the hour.

FACETIA.

WAITING-MAID: "Good morning, doctor. My lady sends me to beg you to come to her husband as quickly as possible. She does not wish him to die without your assistance."

"Let me see," said a minister, who was filling out a marriage certificate and had forgotten the date; "this is the fifth, is it not?" "No, sir," replied the bride, with some indignation, "this is only my second."

AUGUSTUS: "Charming girl, that Miss Lucy, Jack." JACK: "Think so? I never could bear her. She always treats me as if I were an ass, you know." AUGUSTUS: "Indeed! I didn't know she knew you."

WHY HE QUIT THE LOVE BUSINESS.—A number of gentlemen were talking about love. "I've always had bad luck in love affairs," said Mr. Peterby. "The first woman I loved died." "How about the next one?" "She ran off with another man, and the third one became my wife. Then I became discouraged, and quit the business."

I BELIEVE I've lost my wits," said a worried husband to his wife. "Indeed? I didn't know you had any to lose," she answered, sarcastically. "Oh, yes, dear, I had some once." "Well, I never observed them." "No, love, I lost them just before I met you." He didn't want to say it, but she drove him to it.

HOW SHE KEPT IT.—Miss Betty was a remarkably young and handsome-looking woman for her years, and she never told anyone how old she was. "Gracious me, Miss Betty," said an old acquaintance, admiringly, one day, "how well you keep your age!" "Thanks," she replied, with a smile. "How do you ever manage to do it?" "Oh, easy enough; I never give it away."

A DONKEY WITH SHORT EARS.—A young sportsman on horseback hurriedly enters a meadow and accosts a farmer's boy: "Say, boy, have you seen a deer pass this way? You know what a deer is like?" "No, I don't." "Why, something like a donkey with short ears. Have you seen anything answering to that description?" Not till you came by."

A MUSTARD PLASTER.—"Here comes the mustard plaster," said one draper's assistant to another, as a lady with a sharp nose and a business-like air waltzed into the shop and proceeded to tumble over a big pile of goods. "What a funny name!" said a customer who was standing by. "Why do you call her a mustard plaster?" "Simply because she gets in front of the counter and buys nothing, and asks so many questions that she irritates the poor assistant who is waiting on her." "How does that make her a mustard plaster?" "Because she is a counter-irritant."

A DEEP INTEREST.—Dr. Blister had only been* in Austin a few days when a plainly-dressed man called on him. "I hear, doctor, that you are going to settle in our town?" "Yes; I am going to identify myself with the place and help build it up. I feel a deep interest in the future prosperity of Austin." "I am glad to hear it. I think we can work into each other's hands much to our mutual interest. I feel a deep interest in the place myself." "Are you the proprietor of a chemist's shop?" "Oh, no; I am only a poor grave-digger."

BOY WANTED.—I was coming out of a room the other day, just as my office-boy was passing. The door opens outward, and it struck the boy's elbow, causing him to drop a pile of books he was carrying. As I helped him pick the books up, I remarked: "Excuse me, Jimmy, but I couldn't see you. There ought to be a hole bored in that door, so a person could see if any one was passing." "Why, Mr. C.," said the wretch, with a mirthful twinkle in his eye, "that wouldn't do any good. There's one whole board in it now." He was dishonorably discharged.

A POLISHED DELIVERY.—Cuffs and collars from the laundry.

"How long does this train stop for refreshments?" asked a traveller, as he entered a railway refreshment bar. "It depends on how hungry the guard is," said the waiter.

Two gentlemen were lately examining the breast of a plough on a stall in the market-place of a country town. "I'll bet you a crown," said one, "you don't know what it's for." "Done!" said the other. "It is for sale!"

"You may quote the French proverb about appetite coming with eating as often as you like, but I shall never believe it," said an old fellow at a club to his friend. "Here I've been eating for the last couple of hours, and still no appetite!"

"You needn't pretend to look down on me, sir," said a tramp to a lawyer, of whom he was begging. "Well, it seems to me you think you are somebody." "Well, I'm just as good as you, sir. I solicit money of you, that's all. So I don't see but that we both are in the same boat—both solicitors."

SMART.—Scene: School-playground; first day of term. Old Boy: "Oh, your name's Leo, is it? What, Leo? a lion? What a beastly name! Why didn't you object to it?" New Boy: "Well, you see, when I was christened I didn't know enough Latin to decline it."

WEAK BROTH.—Foote, the actor and wit, being ill in a lodging-house, made up his mind for some chicken broth. The order went down into the kitchen, and the broth came up, weak and insipid. The sick man was subsequently relating his disappointment to a friend, who said: "They just let a chicken wade through it." "If they did," said the wit, faintly, "it had stiffs on."

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT SANTA CLAUS TO BRING YOU DOWN THE CHIMNEY NEXT CHRISTMAS? asked old Mrs. Docking of her grandchild, Tommy. "Grandmother, I am surprised that a person of your age should still believe in such childish things," was the reply of the little fellow, who will be five years old on his next birthday.

"THERE'S A SAD CASE," said old Mrs. Squaggs, as she laid the paper on her knees and wiped her spectacles; "a bride struck dumb after leaving the altar, and at last accounts she hadn't recovered her speech." "It's the way of the world, my dear," said old Mr. Squaggs, with a sigh, "it's the way of the world; some men have all the luck."

REFRESHMENTS FOR THE PEOPLE.—Dumb people are necessarily obliged to make the best of "Mumm." Gardeners, as a rule, affect some "Shrub." Deacons find much comfort in "Elder" wine. Dancing masters copiously imbibe "Hop" tea. Old Carthusians swear by "Chartreuse." Co-operative shareholders should stick to "Co-oper."

"DON'T YOU DAKE A LITTLE SLEEP AFTER DINNER?" asked Jake Levy of Mose Schaumberg. "I dakes a liddle rest in a vile, put not every day." "VY DON'T YOU DAKE A REST EVERY DAY?" "Pecause my wife don't go to schleep every day. Ven she goes to schleep, den I gets my rest, but not oderwise."

WHEN A CERTAIN CROWNED HEAD WAS IN ENGLAND, Queen Victoria presented Sir Edwin Landseer to his Majesty, as a painter whose works she had been collecting. "Ah, Sir Edwin," exclaimed the King; "delighted to make your acquaintance. I was always very fond of beasts."

ADELE IS A SPLENDID COOK, BUT IT IS EVIDENT THAT SHE CANNOT CONTENT EVERYBODY. The other evening madame went into the kitchen and found the gas-stove lighted. "Why, Adele, do you light your stove at this hour?"—"But I have not put it out since morning."—"Why, girl, are you crazy?"—"No; but madame is always complaining that I use too many matches."

SOCIETY.

PRINCE GEORGE OF WALES, it is stated, has gained a first-class certificate in gunnery as the result of his studies on board the *Excellent*; he is now qualifying in pilotage, and with three first-class certificates will be promoted to his lieutenancy at an early date.

THE two young Princes of Sweden, about whom so much has been reported with regard to their probable engagement to the daughters of the Prince of Wales, are now staying at Copenhagen with the Danish Royal family, where they have been introduced to the three Princesses, and other members of the family.

THE CROWN PRINCE OF AUSTRIA has recovered from the carriage accident he met with a few days ago, as he was returning to Laxenburg from the manoeuvres at Pöltzen, when the horses of his Victoria bolted on the road near Schönbrunn, and dashed against a post, upsetting the carriage in a ditch, from which the Prince was with difficulty extricated, covered with mud and wounded in the left hand.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES has promised to open the new Institute for Working Lads recently erected opposite the London Hospital in Whitechapel-road, on October 31.

NORWAY has this year been more favoured than usual by British tourists. The Bishop of Durham, who was at Odde during the visit of Mr. Gladstone, conducted service in the hotel there on the Sunday morning, as well as an early celebration of the Holy Communion on board Sir Thomas Brassey's yacht.

SIR MORTON PETO's youngest daughter was married on the 3rd ult. to Mr. L. Baker, of Ottershaw Park, Surrey. The bride's dress consisted of a petticoat of white duchesse satin, trimmed with a flounce of Brussels lace, with bodice and long train of frise velvet, a small wreath of orange blossoms, and tulle veil. Her train was borne by a page wearing a costume of the period of Charles I., composed of black velvet, with yellow satin waist-coats. The four bridesmaids were dressed in cream Indian silk, trimmed with lace, and sashes of yellow silk, with Gainsborough hats *en suite*, with yellow aigrettes; each wore a pearl brooch, and carried a bouquet of yellow marguerites, gifts of the bridegroom.

MRS. BUTLER (Miss Elizabeth Thompson), we understand, intends joining her husband at Wady Halfa, to the Government of which the lately-made General has been appointed.

SPLENDID sport is being obtained in the deer forests of Balmoral and Abergeldie by Prince Henry of Battenberg, the Hereditary Grand Duke of Hesse, and Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein.

LADY FREDERICK CAVENDISH presented to the Corporation of Barrow-in-Furness a portrait in oil of her late husband, which is an exact copy, by Neumanns, of Scarborough, of that now hanging in the council-room of the Yorkshire College, Leeds.

The recent visit of Sir Evelyn Wood to Her Majesty had an especial interest apart altogether from immediate matters of State. When his grandfather, Sir Matthew Wood, then Lord Mayor, and who became famous as the champion in the City of the persecuted Queen Caroline, heard that the Duchess of Kent was about to give birth to a child, and could not come to England at the time, owing to her husband's narrowness of means, the Lord Mayor spontaneously provided a sum of £3,000 to defray the expenses of the journey, so that the heir or heiress to the British Crown might be born on British soil. After a long interval the money was of course repaid, but this unique act of patriotism was not forgotten, and Her Majesty, who has a keen sensibility of acts of devotion to her dynasty, has ever been mindful of the noteworthy incident.

STATISTICS.

THE REVENUE.—The net revenue for the financial year 1884-85 was £83,755,763 as against £81,819,747 in the previous year, and as against £70,974,545 ten years before.

PAUPERISM.—The total number of paupers in receipt of relief on the last day of the last week of the quarters ended Midsummer 1883, 1884, and 1885, has decreased in 1885, as compared with 1884, by 5,601, or 0·8 per cent.; whilst, as compared with 1883, it has decreased 10,008, or 1·4 per cent. Number of paupers in England and Wales at the end of the Midsummer quarter: 1883, 694,036; ditto, 1884, 689,629; ditto, 1885, 684,028. In the three divisions of England in which the principal manufactures are carried on—namely, the North-Midland, North-Western, and York Divisions—the number of paupers relieved on the last day of the last week of the quarters ended Midsummer, 1883, 1884, and 1885, shows an increase in 1885, compared with 1884, of 754, or 0·4 per cent., [and that in comparison with 1883 an increase of 837, or 0·5 per cent. Number of paupers in North-Midland, North-Western, and York Divisions, at the end of Midsummer quarter, 1883, 183,102; ditto, 1884, 183,185; ditto, 1885, 183,939.

GEMS.

To see the world is to judge the judges. The time for reasoning is before we have approached near enough to the forbidden fruit to look at and admire it.

It is easy enough to tell what you know about everybody else, but hard to tell what everybody else knows about you.

SMILE not at the legend as vain, that once in holy hands a worthless stone becomes a heap of silver. Let thy alchemist be contentment, and stone or ore shall be equal to thee.

A TRULY courageous man may be very much afraid; but he can never act the part of a coward. When the crisis comes he will nerve himself to action, and prove not that he is fearless, but that fear is his servant, not his master.

The more duties a woman has to perform the more need has she for uniform good temper and strong, healthy nerves. Some women are miserable when idle, even when rest is necessary. When to rest, how to rest, and where to rest each must determine for herself; but all know that nature rebels unless true and complete rest is taken during some portion of each day.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

FRESH HERRINGS.—Cut off the heads, and well clean the herrings; place them on a gridiron over a bright fire, and broil for ten or twenty minutes, according to size. Serve very hot with sauce in a tureen.

MUSTARD SAUCE FOR RED HERRING.—Knead a dessertspoonful of baked flour and a tea-spoonful of flour of mustard with three ounces of butter, and stir into a gill of boiling water; boil five minutes; add a teaspoonful of vinegar, and serve.

POTATO PIE, MADE WITH NECK OF MUTTON.—Take one and a-half pounds of the middle of the neck of mutton, the portion which lies between the scrag and the fatty part. Cut this, bones and all, into pieces of about one inch square. Place these in a pie dish with plenty of thinly-sliced potatoes, putting first a layer of meat, then one of potatoes, then another layer of meat, and plenty of potatoes at the top. Add a seasoning of salt and pepper, and fill the dish with milk. Lay a fairly thick suet crust over all, and bake for about an hour and a-half.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE first cracks made in the smooth surface of friendship are as dangerous as those which come to the sheeren satin garment of young married love. Freedoms of speech and exactingness of attention, neglect of due forms, liberties beyond the licence of just intimacy, all these are cracks to be stopped in the beginning, else the time will come when no masonry of tact or of affection can repair them.

I LEAVE my friend always at liberty to think and act for himself in matters of little importance. Why compel him to think and act with me? Am I the type of all that is beautiful and right? Is it not absurd to think that because another acts and thinks differently to myself, he must needs be wrong? No doubt I may not always say, "You are right," but I can at any rate let him think it. Try this recipe of mine, and I can answer for it your friendship will be lasting.

KIND words are the music of the world. They have a power which seems to be beyond natural causes, as if they were some angel's song which had lost its way and come on earth, and sang on undyingly, smiting the hearts of men with sweetest wounds, and putting for the while an angelic nature in us. Hard words, on the other hand, are like hailstones in summer, beating down and destroying what they would nourish were they melted into drops.

BACHELORHOOD.—There is no class of men thought so little of as old bachelors, and no state of social existence of such universal misrepresentation and unmerited disparagement as that state which a very good-natured poet has called "single-blessedness." He is usually a man of pleasure, admiring everything in general and nothing in particular; taking a sip from each flower that pleases, yet neglecting to pluck any, till suddenly he finds himself on the threshold of old bachelorship. When this truth dawns upon him his first thought is to take a wife; but the matter usually ends with his taking a cigar.

A MISTAKE TO BE RECTIFIED.—One great cause of early marriages is the pernicious habit of calling a girl who remains unmarried until twenty-five an "old maid." This is done by many well-meaning but thoughtless persons, who would be sorry to think that any act or expression of theirs had ever caused one an hour of misery; yet this very dread of being called an "old maid" has driven more women into marriage and life-long misery than any other thing, excepting perhaps poverty. It is a mistake to think that single life is any less noble than marriage, especially if the spirit of discord is permitted to inflict its horrors upon a whole household.

NEW SOUTH WALES ASBESTOS.—An asbestos mine exists on the spur of a hill about two miles from Gundagai, New South Wales, in which the lode has been driven upon for a distance of 90 feet, and a shaft 100 feet deep has also been sunk. The mineral occurs in a serpentine formation similar to quartz veins, and is mined in the same manner. The material is very abundant, and is stated to be of as good quality as any in the world. The shareholders have started an asbestos factory, in which they propose to work up asbestos for various purposes, amongst others, for the manufacture of a fire-proof paint. On the same property another class of asbestos has been discovered and worked in connection with gold. The lode is peculiar in character, and, with one or two minor exceptions, is almost identical with the famous Lucknow lode, which has proved so rich in gold. In some instances veins of calcspar make their appearance in the lode, bringing gold with them every time. Arsenical and iron pyrites are abundant, and, so far as the load has been worked, it has proved payable by crushing tests, without one failure.

Oct. 10, 1885.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. F.—Cantharides oil.

AN OLD READER.—The marriage is quite legal.

G. W.—The offspring of an Irishman and a French woman would be Irish of course.

L. C.—Wines were first made in Britain in the year 870.

D. D.—Clocks were introduced into Constantinople from Venice in the year 870.

H. Z.—Touching, for curing the "King's evil," was first performed by King Edward, in the year 1058.

PADDO.—Ireland was first taken possession of by the English, under King Henry II., in the year 1172.

ELLA.—The surname "Nora Magee" should be pronounced hard, like the Scotch word "gile" (give).

F. C.—The first telegraph (a semaphore) was erected in England in January, 1796.

T. R.—There are 700 earthquakes recorded in history since the year 285 B.C.

LADY OF ST. QUEEN.—Glycerine is good for the skin, and tends to whiten it.

ROSE HELLKE.—You are very hardly treated. Do not give up your sweethearts.

X. Y. Z.—Certainly she can remove her furniture. The son has no right to it.

HELEN W.—1. We cannot tell from the scanty specimen sent. 2. It is too masculine.

C. W.—The newspaper is correct, and you are wrong; the phrase is "Seldom or ever."

H. H.—Mr. Baron Alderson did officiate as one of the judges of the Court of Exchequer in the year 1856.

LILY ROSE.—Assume your position as a wife, and insist that your marriage should be made public.

JUMBO.—We sympathise with you, but must decline to be a party to any such fraud.

C. W.—Why not at once consult a surgeon, who would, we doubt not, speedily cure your temporary deafness?

G. L.—Zurich is a lake in Switzerland, extending in the form of a crescent chiefly through the canton of Zurich.

B. W.—Messiah is pronounced mæs-si-ah. It is a Hebrew word, signifying "the anointed," and applied expressively of eminence to Our Saviour.

P. W.—To your first question, "No"; other evidence would assuredly be necessary. To your second, decidedly "Yes."

S. W.—If marking ink be, as its makers profess, indelible, it cannot be erased without injury to the paper.

M. G.—Ginger sponge cake is made by using one cup of treacle, one of butter, two of sugar, four eggs, three cups of flour, one of milk, soda, and ginger.

M. W.—The specimens of hair enclosed are respectively very dark brown and very light brown. (Hand-writing very bad indeed, why not take a few lessons?)

H. J. H.—The verses are declined with thanks. Take animal food and bread, very little liquid and plenty of exercise.

R. W.—1. It sent in a Government registered envelope the Government are responsible up to £2. 2. The 1st December, 1861, was a Friday.

M. B.—Your penmanship is very good, but your poetry so very far short of the mark that we regret to say it is not fit for print.

L. F.—We doubt whether you can find any cure; the building is in all probability old and worm-eaten; a builder, however, might advise you.

D.—If you have had the mark upon your face from infancy you will in all probability carry it with you to your grave; if otherwise consult a medical man.

W. G.—It is not good for cousins to marry, as a rule, as the too frequent intermarriage of blood relations has been known to produce insanity.

G. B.—It is decidedly illegal to write anything upon a newspaper passing through the post, except the address to which it is intended to go.

I. F.—The much-talked-about Greek-fire is no myth. It is composed of a solution of phosphorus in bisulphate of iron.

L. S.—The expense of armorial bearings varies, according to the trouble given. They are to be obtained at the Herald's College.

J. S.—It should be removed during the ceremony, and may or may not be worn afterwards, according to taste.

P. F. G.—Consult a respectable medical man. Diseases of the chest of all kinds require very skilful treatment.

D. T. S.—We certainly do not know of any means of "straightening a bent leg bone;" consult a hospital surgeon.

L. L.—1. We do not believe in the charlatanism which professes to tell character by the handwriting. 2. To cure bunions: Iodine, twelve grains; and lard or spermaceti ointment, half-an-ounce; apply twice or thrice a day.

N. R.—Your friend the "Young Pop" is correct. The word is most assuredly pronounced as spelt. The other pronunciation is affected in the extreme.

MINA.—Curling of the hair may be promoted by infusing some bay leaves in a little rum; let it remain for a week, and then strain off the liquor.

R. H. H.—We do not think the posse you mention would be suitable to our columns; but how can you expect us to give our opinion of a work we have not seen?

UNE ANGLAISE.—Very fair for a beginner, but some of the verbs are incorrect, and the spelling might be improved. 2. Writing quite good enough. 3. Decidedly wrong.

LEWA.—The "Civil Service Guide," which you may procure from any bookseller for one shilling and sixpence, will supply you with the information you seek. Handwriting very good and business-like.

G. M.—Why not apply to a bird-stuffer? The cost would be but small, while if you make the attempt yourself you will, in all probability, waste your time and money, and spoil your bird.

T. R.—To make a good gargle for a relaxed sore throat take five ounces of cayenne pepper, two ounces of infusion of roses, one ounce of syrup of roses; mix all together.

AT THE GARDEN GATE.

We loitered long at the garden gate,
 He held my hand, and the moon was
 The roses dreaming in purple state
 Nodded drowsily to and fro—
 And O, but the night was heavenly fair,
 With silence and sweetness everywhere!

Beyond the borders of mignonette
 The daisies, gleaming in silver bars,
 Stirred in the grasses, all dewy wet,
 Like the palpitating white fire of stars:
 "Sweet," he whispered, "the hour is late!"
 But still we lingered within the gate.

Ah, me! What magic of youth and love?
 He held us thrall'd in the moonlight pale?
 While out of the gloom of some green alcove
 The soft jug-jug of the nightingale,
 Like a distant echo of elfin bells,
 Stole thro' the murmur of fond farewells!

The white moon drifted behind the tower,
 And, faint in the sleeping town below,
 The clocks were striking the weird mid-hour:
 "Kiss me, Cara, and bid me go!"
 Then silence deepened around us, and
 Still he tarried and held my hand.

A vague wind ruffled the beds of bloom,
 Rifled the syringes' sanguine spice,
 Stirred the lise, and sweetened the gloom
 With all the odours of Paradise.
 And over the spires of the ghostly town
 Like a stranded lily the moon went down.

And then, with a sudden, conscious start,
 (Red as the reddest rose was I),
 We tore our clinging hands apart,
 And scurried away with a brief "good-bye."
 And here is the moral that prints my rhyme,
 Evolved from the wisdom of sundry years,
 Under the moon, in the sweet June time,
 A man in love requires, my dears,
 Three mortal hours, be it ever so late,
 To say good-night at the garden gate.

E. A. B.

HOUSEKEEPER.—To make a cold custard take one quart of new milk, half pint of cream, four ounces of loaf sugar, a teaspoonful of flour, half a nutmeg; stir all well together; bake like a custard pie.

E. N.—To make a spice cake have one pound of dough, half pound of butter; the same of currants, sugar, and spice; mix all well together, and bake in a mold for one hour.

T. L.—To make plate look like new take a pound of unaltered lime, the same of alum, one pint of aquafortis and vinegar, two quarts of beer grounds; boil the plate in this, and it will look beautiful.

L. G.—The lines, "I am monarch of all I survey," are by Cowper, and form part of a poem supposed to have been written by Alexander Selkirk on the island of Juan Fernandez.

D. R.—No clergyman would perform the ceremony of marriage except in the canonical hours, which are before twelve, except by an special licence from the Archbishop, in which case we believe you could be married anywhere at any time.

R. E.—Your red nose not arising, as you assure us it does not, from the too frequent use of intoxicating liquors, in all probability arises from a disordered stomach, or indigestion. In either case apply to a medical man, who will doubtless relieve you.

C. R.—Nothing but experience will enable you to judge correctly with regard to the genuineness of diamonds. It would take you years to acquire sufficient knowledge of precious stones to warrant you in trusting to your own judgment in purchasing them. Your best way would be to purchase them at some jeweller's whose reputation for integrity would be a sufficient guarantee for the genuineness of any diamonds he should sell you.

G. W.—Take a friend's advice, try to be always in a good temper; anger is destructive of vitality; both men and women are better if cheerful; a light heart makes nimble hands, keeps the body healthy, and the mind free.

A. M. M.—You are quite right; compositions of zinc and copper may be rendered sufficiently hard to cut steel, and is useful for tools; we have seen a good workman two days in making a 1½-inch hole in a brass bell.

F. F.—Without doubt, next to that of Japan, the coast of England is the most dangerous in the world, hence the great value of life-boats. The first of these was built and launched at South Shields in the year 1790.

J. H. J.—Of the native quadrupeds of California the grizzly bear is the largest and most formidable. It grows to be four feet high and seven feet long, weighing two thousand pounds, when very large and fat. No mention is made of the lion or tiger.

SARAH.—1. Eugenie, ex-Empress of the French, was born on May 5, 1826. She is, therefore, a few months over fifty-nine years of age. 2. The Prince Imperial was born on March 16th, 1856. 3. There was no foundation, except public gossip, for the report of an engagement between the Prince Imperial and the Princess Beatrice.

M. D.—Your best way would be to send some of your stories or poems to a paper in your neighbourhood, and see if the editor will publish them. If he should do so, and if they should possess sufficient merit, your name as a successful writer would become known to the public, and you would then be in a position to obtain pay for your writings.

FAN.—A mother who exhibits her children at a museum is certainly acting very foolishly, and you have a perfect right to mark your disapprobation by avoiding her society, but that is all that duty calls on you to do. Only small-minded people talk much, or worry themselves over conduct in their neighbours which does not affect them, and which they cannot control.

TON.—The use of glass bottles of coloured liquid as an apothecary's sign dates back to the time when blood-letting formed a large part of the duties of the medical man. Originally the fluid in the bottle was red, to represent blood, and was intended to notify the public that any one could be "let blood," at the house bearing the sign; then, later, when the original meaning of the red bottle was forgotten, fancy and caprice led to the substitution of other colours.

G. W. R.—The amount of coal consumed per day by an ocean steamer varies with the size and speed of the vessel. Steamers, which a few years ago were thought very swift and impetuous, consumed only eighty to one hundred tons per day, on eight and nine day passages, but the enormous racers of the last few years, which rush across the Atlantic in seven days, consume sometimes very nearly three hundred and fifty tons per day. Two hundred tons of coal may be taken as about the average daily ration of a large Atlantic steamer.

M. C. A.—The managers of your academy show good taste in substituting medals for diplomas. College degrees are so associated in the minds of most people with the classics and the arts and sciences, that there is a little absurdity in giving these degrees for proficiency in elementary studies. However, any school may confer the degree of Bachelor of Heading, Writing and Arithmetic, which would probably be abbreviated into B. H. R. R.; that is, Bachelor of the three R's." "Pluribus Unum" means "One from Many;" "Maitam in parvo," "Much in little;" and "Excelsior," "higher."

H. H. R.—An electric motor is no more a source of power than is a belt or a line of shafting; it is simply a means of transmitting power generated at one point to one or more other points. The entire plant consists of (1) a steam engine or other source of power, (2) an electrical machine, to turn the power into electricity, (3) a conductor to lead the electricity to the point where it is used, (4) a second electrical machine to receive the current, to run backwards and re-convert the electricity into force. Full practical directions to make such a plant would require much space, and then be useless, for your simplest plan is to connect your original source of power directly with the scroll saw.

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We cannot undertake to return rejected manuscripts.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. R. Speck; and Printed by Woodfall and Kinder, Milford Lane, Strand.